

THE *A. Cunningham*
O D Y S S E Y
O F
H O M E R.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

BY

7
ALEXANDER POPE, ESQ;

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

L O N D O N,

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THE

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OF THE

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THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIX.

Penelope.

THE ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armory. Ulysses in the conversation with Penelope gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete; and describes exactly his person and dress, affirms to have heard of him in Phaacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-ey'd maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses stay'd:

Revenge mature for act inflam'd his breast;

And thus the son the fervent fire address.

The scene still continues in the palace of Ulysses; but new persons are introduced to carry on the action, and diversify the story. This book opens with a repetition from the sixteenth; the ancients marked it with an asterisk, without any obelisk, to shew that it was here inserted with propriety: as we draw nearer to the conclusion of the poem, the repetitions are more frequent. Virgil has ge-

Instant convey those steely stores of war 5
 To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
 The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
 To soothe their fears a specious reason feign :
 Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
 Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost, 10
 His arms deform'd, the roof they won't adorn :
 From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
 Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
 Left they by fight of swords to fury fir'd,
 Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul, 15
 Defame the bridal feast, and friendly bowl.

nerally avoided them, and indeed it may be observed, that these two poets differ in nothing more than the manner of their elocution: Virgil is full, but Homer even overflows; and this agrees with their general characters. Homer is like those painters of whom Apelles used to complain, that they left nothing to be imagined by the spectator, and made too accurate representations; but Virgil is like Timantes in Pliny. *Timanti plurimum adfuit ingenii, in omnibus operibus ejus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur*: and again, *ostendit etiam quæ occultat*.

Eustathius observes, that the unexpected opportunity to remove the arms in the absence of the suitors, occasions this repetition; in the sixteenth book Ulysses told Telemachus he would give a sign when he should make the removal, despairing of an opportunity to give a public direction, without danger from the suitors: he therefore wisely lays hold of the present hour which happily favours his desires, and enjoins the arms to be removed immediately.

The prince obedient to the sage command,
 To Euryclea thus : the female band
 In their apartments keep ; secure the doors :
 These swarthy arms among the covert stores 20
 Are seemlier hid ; my thoughtless youth they blame,
 Imbrown'd with vapour of the smould'ring flame.

In happy hour (pleas'd Euryclea cries)
 Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wife !
 Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
 Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
 But who the lighted taper will provide,
 (The female train retir'd) your toils to guide ?

Without infringing hospitable right,
 This guest (he cry'd) shall bear the guiding light : 30
 I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast ;
 They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said ; from female ken she strait secures
 The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors :
 Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears 35
 The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears
 With shields indented deep in glorious wars.
 Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
 And with her golden lamp his toil befriends :

v. 18. ——— *the female band*

In their apartments keep, etc.]

It is not without sufficient reason that Telemachus distrusts the maids ; many of them were in the interest of the suitors : it was therefore necessary to conceal the place to which the arms were conveyed, lest they should betray the secret. Eustathius.

v. 38. ——— *Minerva——with her golden lamp.—]*

Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere,

40

Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere !

A present deity the prince confess'd,

And rapt with ecstacy the fire address'd.

What miracle thus dazzles with surprize !

Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise :

45

The office here ascribed to Minerva gave great offence to Rapin, and he censured it as mean, and unworthy of the goddesses ; but Eustathius fully vindicates Homer ; Pallas is here an allegorical deity, intended by the poet to express the wisdom of Ulysses ; he acts with as much prudence as if Minerva herself guided him in all his ways. We are to gather from this description, that Ulysses formed all the actions of this night with the utmost wisdom, or according to the Greek proverb, *ἐν νυκτὶ βελή*, the *counsels of this night* were regulated with the exactest prudence and secrecy. Spondanus observes, that Callimachus, a statuary in Athens, made an image of Minerva according to this picture in Homer : She held a lamp of gold, which was filled with an oil of such an unwasting nature, as not to want to be replenished in the space of a whole year. See *lib. 1.* of Pausanias. Dacier judges, that though a lamp was unknown in the days of Ulysses, yet it might not be so in the days of Homer, and therefore he might speak of it ; for instance, the trumpet was not known in the Trojan war, yet Homer mentions it, because it was used in his age. But this is no answer ; for Homer does not say that the trumpet was used during the siege of Troy ; if he had he would have been guilty of a gross anachronism, but he speaks of it by way of allusion, as a thing well known in his time. Here therefore the case is different, for Ulysses is the person who is supposed to make use of this lamp, and Dacier allows that it was unknown in his age, and consequently he ought not to use it at all. It may therefore perhaps be most probable, that Callimachus did not form his statue from this original ; or if this

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

The walls where-e'er my wond'ring sight I turn,
And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn !
Some visitant of pure ethereal race,
With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.

Be calm, replies the fire ; to none impart, 59
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart :

be not allowed, that he fell into an error, and gave the goddess a lamp instead of a torch.

I will only further add, that this office of Minerva may be vindicated from all meanness, by observing that it is not the bare act of carrying the torch which the goddess here executes ; she improves it into a miracle ; the whole palace is enlightened with a celestial fire, and Ulysses and Telemachus gather full assurances of her favour and success from that miraculous illumination : this circumstance raises the description out of lowness into dignity.

v. 48. *Some visitant of pure ethereal race.*] Eustathius gives us a twofold explication of the words,

Αὐτὴ τοὶ δίκην ἐστὶ θεῶν——

They imply either that the goddess Themis descended ; or that it is the custom of celestial powers to manifest themselves in such illuminations, without appearing visibly. The latter interpretation seems most natural, and makes the construction easy, whereas the other is scarce to be understood without supplying ἀπὸ before θεῶν : otherwise it must be allowed, that the former opinion is not unhappy : Ulysses tells his son, that the goddess of justice is sent by the gods to assist him in taking vengeance on the suitors : Themis is a very proper deity to be introduced upon such an occasion, and shews that Ulysses proceeds upon the strictest rules of equity, in the distribution of his rewards and punishments. But the passage will not admit this sense, it being evidently Pallas, not Themis, who appears.

Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
 Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
 Seek thou repose; whilst here I sole remain,
 T' explore the conduct of the female train : 55
 The pensive queen perchance desires to know
 The series of my toils, to soothe her woe:

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
 His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends :
 Soft slumbrous shades his drooping eye-lids close, 60
 'Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses stay'd,
 In council secret with the martial maid ;
 Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
 The queen, descending from her bow'r of state. 65
 Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
 An ivory seat with silver ringlets grac'd,
 By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd :
 With ivory silver'd thick the foot-stool shone, 70
 O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
 The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd ;
 To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd :

v. 69. *By fam'd Icmalius wrought* ———] Homer in both his poems takes all opportunities of celebrating the famous artisans of antiquity: I doubt not but most of them were his particular friends, and to do them honour, he gave them place in his works, and rendered their names and his own gratitude immortal. We may likewise learn the nature of the noblest pieces of art in Homer's days from his poetry.

The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
 From stains of luxury the polish'd board : 75
 These to remove th' expiring embers came,
 While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mein
 Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen :
 Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight ! 80
 Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
 Into the woman-state asquint to pry ;
 A day-devourer, and an ev'ning spy !
 Vagrant, begone ! before this blazing brand
 Shall urge—and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

Th' insulted heroe rous'd his wrathful eyes,
 And, why, so turbulent of soul ? he cries ;
 Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
 These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage ?
 In crowds we wear the badge of hungry fate,
 And beg, degraded from superior state :
 Constrain'd ! a rent-charge on the rich I live ;
 Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give :

v. 82. *Into the woman-state asquint to pry.*] This is the true reason why Melantho is out of humour (says madam Dacier :) she had some affairs upon her hands, which demanded no witnesses, meaning the vicious commerce between her and Eurymachus. Women never forgive their own sex a frailty. Dacier is undoubtedly in an error ; Eurymachus in the end of the last book left the palace, and therefore Melantho could not speak out of any apprehensions of having a stop put to her affairs this night by the presence of Ulysses.

A palace, wealth, and slaves, I late possess'd,
 And all that makes the great be call'd the blest'd: 95
 My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
 Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
 Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid !
 'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd !
 Nor think thyself exempt: that rosy prime 100
 Must share the general doom of with'ring time :
 To some new channel soon, the changeful tide
 Of royal grace th' offended queen may guide ;
 And her lov'd Lord unplume thy tow'ring pride. }
 Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware : 105
 Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care ;
 Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys ;
 Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

v. 106. *Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care.*] It may be asked why Telemachus is said to owe the preservation of his life to Apollo? Eustathius answers, that he was called Ὁ θεὸς κρητορὸφος by antiquity; and that Daphne from being his favourite was named κρηθαλεία: But perhaps that epithet was appropriated to Apollo, because all immature deaths in the male sex were ascribed to him, as they were to Diana in the female; it may therefore be said with great propriety that it is owing to the favour of Apollo, that Telemachus had not died an immature death, or that he was arrived to manhood: Eustathius adds, that Apollo, as he is the sun, may be called the nourisher of all things that breathe, as well as of the inanimate creation; it is owing to his influence that every being comes to maturity, and in this sense likewise he may be called κρητορὸφος. What Eustathius ascribes to Daphne, Dacier applies to Diana, and tells us, that she was called Κρηθαλεία, and that the ancients ce-

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sov'reign's ear;
 Loquacious insolent ! she cries, forbear : 110
 To thee the purpose of my soul I told,
 Venial discourse unblam'd with him to hold.
 The storied labours of my wand'ring Lord,
 To soothe my grief, he haply may record :
 Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung ; 115
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue !

celebrated a festival in her honour for the health of their infants.

v. 110. *Loquacious insolent*——] Were this place to be rendered literally, it would be thus, *Thou bold impudent bitch* ; *θαρσυαλήν κύον ἀδδείς*. It is spoken by Penelope. In our age it is an expression so vulgar, as not to be uttered in common conversation, much less in epic poetry : it is true it fully expresses the height of impudence, and in Homer's time it was no more mean, than calling a coward a *deer*, and both the expressions are joined together in the first of the Iliad.

Thou dog in forehead, but in heart a deer.

It is there spoken by Achilles : and in another place of the Iliad Jupiter applies it to his wife, and calls Juno an impudent bitch : a plain indication that the expression was not mean, as it is at this day, because it was used by the greatest of heroes, and the supreme of Gods.

v. 116. *Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue.*] The expression in the Greek is remarkable.

——— Ὅ σῃ κεφαλῇ ἀναμάζεις.

which you shall wipe upon your own head, or as Eustathius explains it, “ a crime which you shall make to cleave to your own head : ” a similar expression (adds the same author) occurs in Sophocles.

——— καὶ πρὸς λυτροῖσιν καὶ σφ.

Κηλίδας ἐξάμαζεν.

But thou on whom my palace-cares depend,
 Eurynome, regard the stranger friend:
 A seat soft spread with furry spoils prepare,
 Due-distant for us both to speak and hear. 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste:
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd:
 Due-distant for discourse the heroic fate;
 When thus the sov'reign from her chair of state:
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy natal land.

He thus: O queen! whose far-resounding fame,
 Is bounded only by the starry frame:
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey! 130
 In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd:
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd;
 And fish of ev'ry fin thy seas afford:

From whence it appears, that the blood that was found upon the sword was wiped upon the head of the slain; an intimation that his own blood was fallen upon the head of the deceased, and the living were free from it. This is a very remarkable custom, and there are many expressions like it in the scriptures; namely, *his blood be upon his own head*. It was customary among the Romans to wash their hands, in token of innocence and purity from blood: thus the Roman governor washed his hands, and said, *I am innocent of the blood of this just person*.

v. 129. *Consummate pattern of imperial sway.*] Homer here gives an amiable picture of a mild and just government: it is a truth certain and universal, where the subject enjoys the fruits of his industry, the earth will al-

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Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess; 135

And bless the pow'r that still delights to bless.

Gracious permit this pray'r, imperial dame!

Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:

Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;

In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep! 140

My woes awak'd will violate your ear;

And to this gay censorious train, appear

A winy vapour melting in a tear. 145

Their gifts the gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd.)

Exterior grace, and energy of mind; 145

When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,

Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.

My lord's protecting hand alone would raise

My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!

Peers from the distant Samian shore resort; 150

Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:

Zacynthus, green with ever shady groves,

And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves:

Obtruding on my choice a second lord,

They press the Hymenæan rite abhorr'd, 155

ways be well cultivated, and bring forth in abundance; the sea will furnish the land with plenty of fishes, and men will plant when they are sure to gather the fruits. It is the constant observation of all travellers, that the worst situation under an easy government enjoys more plenty, and is fuller of inhabitants, than the best soil and happiest situation under an arbitrary power. This whole passage is very beautiful, and the more beautiful because the words proceed from the mouth of a king.

Mis-rule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state affairs :
 Receive no stranger guest, no poor relieve ;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve !——
 This art, instinct by some celestial pow'r, 160
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour :

" Ye peers, I cry, who press to gain a heart,
 " Where dead Ulysses claims no future part ;
 " Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 " 'Till this funereal web my labours end : 165

" Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 " A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 " For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 " With just reproach were licens'd to defame ;
 " Should he, long honour'd in supreme command, 170

" Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."
 The fiction pleas'd ! their loves I long elude ;
 The night still revell'd, what the day renew'd ;
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd : 175

Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprize.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the brede.

My anxious parents urge a speedy choice, 180
 And to their suffrage gain the filial voice :
 For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores——
 But stranger ! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate : 185

Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race ;
No poor unfather'd product of disgrace.

Princess ! he cries, renew'd by your command,
The dear remembrance of my native land,
Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source ; 190

And tears repeat their long forgotten course !
So pays the wretch, whom fate constrains to roam,
The dues of nature to his natal home ! —

But inward on my soul let sorrow prey ;
Your sovereign will my duty bids obey. 195

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil !
And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle :

v. 196. *etc. Crete* —] It is not without a good reason that Ulysses is so particular in the geography of Crete; he does it, that Penelope, from the knowledge of the truth which he speaks concerning that island, may be induced to give the readier credit to his succeeding fictions. In the Iliad, Homer calls Crete *ἑκατόμπολις*, or the island with an hundred cities, lib. 2.

Crete's hundred cities pour forth all her sons.

Here he affirms it to have no more than ninety. Strabo is very full upon this difficulty, lib. 10. Ephorus (says that author) judges that ten cities were built by the Dorians after the Trojan war, under Althæmenes ; and therefore Ulysses here mentions Crete as having only ninety : but this opinion carries no probability. Others affirm, that ten cities were demolished by the enemies of Idomeneus ; but this is no more than a conjecture : the truth is, Homer does not affirm that there were an hundred cities in the time of the war with Troy, but in his own age ; for the poet in that place speaks in his own person ; if he had put the words into the mouth of any one who had lived in the time of the war he would not

Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
In various tongues avow their various claims :

have called it the isle of the hundred, but ninety cities, according to this description of Ulysses; it being very improbable, that ten of the Cretan cities should be destroyed, either during the war, or after the return of Idomeneus; for Homer himself testifies that he returned safe to Crete with all his soldiers, lib. 3. of the Odyssey.

And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain
Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.

And therefore he had sufficient forces to defend his country: but though we allow that these ten cities had been destroyed after his return, yet how could Ulysses come to the knowledge of it, having neither been in Crete, nor met with any Cretan to inform him in all his voyages? It is therefore probable that in the time of the Trojan war Crete had no more than ninety cities, but an hundred in the days of Homer: and thus fully reconciles the Iliad with the Odyssey; in the Odyssey it is Ulysses that speaks, in the Iliad, Homer.

Virgil speaks of Crete after the manner of Homer.

*Creta Jovis magni medio jacet insula ponto.
Centum urbes habitant magnas, uberrima regna.*

The other ten cities were built by the Dorians (as Ephorus writes) under Althæmenes.

v. 199. *In various tongues* ———] The meaning of this is, that the natural inhabitants of Crete were mixed with strangers who had settled in the Island; or as some imagine (says Eustathius) Ulysses speaks thus out of fear, lest Penelope should discover him not to be a native of Crete from his wrong pronunciation of the language of the Cretans. We may gather from Strabo, that the Dorians inhabited the eastern parts, the Cydonians the western, the Eteo-Cretans the southern, and the rest

Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew, 200
And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due :

The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share;
Cnossus, her capital of high command;
Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand 205
Divided right ; each ninth revolving year
By Jove receiv'd, in council to confer.

of the nation, being most powerful, possess the plain country lying towards the north : the Eteo-Cretans, that is, the true Cretans, were the original inhabitants of the island, and probably also the Cydonians. There is some difficulty in the word *τριχάικες*. Andron the historian (continues Strabo) affirms, that the Dorians who lived near Parnassus planted a colony in Crete, and built three cities, and from thence called themselves *τριχάικες*, *quasi tripartiti*. But Strabo rejects this opinion of Andron, for these Dorians possessed four cities, and their country was called *τρίδαπολις*; he therefore believes them to have taken that name from a triple crest, or from having them adorned with hair after the manner of a plumage, from *τρίχες* signifying *hair*. But perhaps Strabo is in a mistake; for Thucydides, lib. 1. p. 107. and Diodorus, lib. 11. p. 60. confirm the opinion of Andron. The words of Strabo have given great trouble to the commentators, and they ingenuously confess they cannot understand them. The expression is *τριχίνες λόφες ἰσημίλλες*: the difficulty lies in *ἰσημίλλες*; but if we read the sentence thus, all will be plain, *τριχίνες λόφες, ἢ ἰσημίλλες*, that is, crests adorned with hair, or something like it, from *ἰσημίλλος*, *aqualis*. Dacier.

v. 206. ——— *Each ninth revolving year, etc.*] This Minos, king of Crete, was an excellent lawgiver; and as Ephorus writes, (says Strabo) to give his laws the great-

His son Deucalion bore successive sway;

His son, who gave me first to view the day!

er veneration, he used to descend into a cave sacred to Jupiter, and pretend that he had there received them from the mouth of that deity; this is the reason why Homer tells us he conversed with Jupiter. Thus also Numa Pompilius boasted of the same favour from Ægeria, to make his decrees to be received by the Romans. The only difficulty is in the word ἐννέαιρος; and it has been generally believed to imply, that Minos continued in the cave of Jupiter nine whole years; but Casaubon remarks, that it never signifies nine years, but every ninth year; as τριταῖος does not mean three days, but the third day: and this agrees exactly with the history of Minos, (see Valerius Maximus, lib. 1. cap. 2.) who was accustomed to review and rectify all his laws every ninth year. Plato quotes this passage in his piece, entitled Minos, and puts this last observation beyond all dispute: 'Homer tells us (says that author) that Minos conversed with Jupiter every ninth year, ἐνὰ τῷ ἔτει, and went to be instructed by him as a scholar by a master;' and a little lower he adds, ἐφοῖτα δὲ ἐνὰ τῷ ἔτει εἰς ἄντρον διδὼς ὁ Μίνως, etc. that is, 'he went into the cave of Jupiter, to learn new laws, or to reform the old which he had received in the former period,' τῇ προτέρᾳ ἐννιάετιδι. This Minos was the most just of all mankind, and for this reason was supposed to be made one of the infernal judges. Plutarch in the life of Demetrius makes a fine remark upon this description of Minos; 'Homer (says he) has not honoured with the glorious title of the disciple of Jupiter, the greatest warrior or oppressor, or a renowned tyrant; but the man famous for his justice and probity, a legislator, and a benefactor to mankind.' Dacier.

v. 207. *By Jove receiv'd, in council to confer.*] The word in the Greek is ἀαρισις, and Plato fully explains it in his Minos; ἀαρις is the discourse, ἀαρισις the person who discourses; ὁ συνεισισηγής ἐν λόγοις: others (continues

The royal bed an elder issue blest, 210
 Idomeneus, whom Ilion fields attest
 Of matchless deed: untrain'd to martial toil
 I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
 Studious of my peace; and Æthon is my name.
 'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came; 215
 For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
 From Malea's guffy cape his navy drove.
 To bright Lucina's fane; the shelvy coast
 Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.

Plato) understand it to signify the guest of Jupiter, *συμπότην*, *συμπαιστήν*, a person that was admitted to the table of Jupiter, or a partaker in his diversions; but the falsity of this opinion (adds he) will sufficiently appear, if we remember, that of all the Greeks, the Cretans and Lacedæmonians who learned it from them, alone abstain from computations, and diversions arising from them; and in particular this is one of the laws of Minos enacted in Crete, *μη συμπίνειν ἀλλήλοις ἐς μέθην*, commanding the Cretans not to drink in their entertainments to excess. Thus far Dacier; to which I shall add that this remark of Plato may perhaps contribute greatly to the glory of Minos, but gives little honour to Jupiter; it insinuates that a person who drinks with that deity, might endanger his sobriety; otherwise to be admitted to the table of Jupiter is an instance of favour and familiarity, and would have been an honour to Minos. Horace is of this opinion, for speaking of Tantalus, lib. 1. Carm. he mentions it as a peculiar testimony of favour;

Occidit et Pelopis genitor, conviva deorum.

That is, according to Homer's expression, *Σταῖρ συνεισέτης* or *συμπότης*.

v. 218. To bright Lucina's fane———] Strabo

His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port!) 220

The hero speeded to the Cnossian court:

Ardent the partner of his arms to find;

In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.

Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand,

Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225

Had sail'd for Troy: but to the genial feast

My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest:

Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,

A public treat, with jars of gen'rous wine.

Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aerial space, 230

My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:

informs us, that upon the Amnissus there is a cave sacred to Ilythia, or Lucina, who presides over childbirth. The reason given by Eustathius why the poet places the cave by that river is too frivolous to be recited: it is probable that it was called the cave of Ilythia, because some great lady had made use of it, upon an occasion in which women invoke the assistance of that goddess; or perhaps because water is one of the great principles of generation, the temple of Lucina could not be placed in a more proper situation, than upon the banks of a river, and close by the sea. Dacier.

V. 228. *Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,*

A public treat———]

It was not to be expected, and indeed it was almost impossible that one person should entertain Ulysses and his whole fleet, which consisted of twelve vessels. This passage therefore gives us a remarkable custom of antiquity, which was, that when any person with too great a number of attendants arrived in other countries, the prince received the chief personage and his particular friends, and the rest were entertained at the public expence. Dacier.

And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.

Thus the fam'd heroe, perfected in wiles,
With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235

The queen's attentive ear: dissolv'd in woe,
From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.

As snows collected on the mountain freeze;
When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,

v. 135. *With fair similitude of truth beguiles.*] The word in the Greek is ἰσχειν, which has been usually interpreted to be the same with ἔλγειν: but those that speak with more exactness derive it from ἡσικεῖν, ἑκαταῖον πρὸς ἀλήθειαν, that is, he accommodated and adapted his fictions to probability or truth; and Hesychius explains the same word by εἰκαζω, ὁμοίῳ: Horace almost literally translates this verse.

*Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscit,
Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepat inum.*

And indeed in this line the whole art of an epic poem is comprehended, which is a mixture of truths and fictions, but fictions conformable to verity; or to speak in the language of a critic, the fable of the epic poem should be both probable and marvellous; astonishing, yet credible: if it be only credible, it differs in nothing from history; if only marvellous, it is no better than a romance. The great secret therefore of an epic writer is to produce in the reader's mind at the same time both belief and astonishment, and this is here performed by Ulysses. Dacier sur l' Aristote.

v. 238. *As snows collected, etc.*] It is not easy to take the point of this simile. Mons. Perault grievously mistakes it: 'The description (says he) which Homer gives us of the sorrow of Penelope is very unaccountable; her body melted like snow upon an high mountain, when the east

The fleecy pile obeys the whisp'ring gales, 240
 Ends in a stream, and murmurs thro' the vales :
 So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
 Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd :
 She to her present lord laments him lost,
 And views that object which she wants the most ! 245

* wind *melt*s it, and the snow thus *melted* fills the rivers ;
 * thus it was that the fair cheeks of Penelope *melted*.
 * Thus, says Perault, is translated word for word.' But
 in reality it resembles Homer in nothing but the repeti-
 tion of the word *melted*, or *τήξίλο*, which in modern lan-
 guages is burdensome to the ear, but not in the Greek ;
 for the word differs from itself according to its different
 formation, almost as much as a new one, and gives a
 very distant sound ; for instance, *τήξίλο*, *τηξαμένης*, *κατήγα-
 ξίς* : Whereas there is almost an identity of sound in *melt*
melted, or *melting* ; or in the French, *liquifie*, *liquifiée*,
liquifiant. Neither has Perault entered into the sense
 of the comparison : *τήξίλο* *χρὸς* is only a figurative hy-
 perbole, as when we say a person is *consumed* or *wasted*
 with grief ; or perhaps *τήξω* signifies no more than *humec-
 to*, as *ταπεινός* *humidus*. In reality it is the quantity of
 tears that is intended to be represented, and the simile is
 thus to be understood : the snows, heaped upon the moun-
 tains by the cold west wind, are the sorrows accumulated
 in the soul of Penelope ; the warm eastern wind, which
 dissolves these snows, is the recital of Ulysses, which melts
 those sorrows into tears and makes them flow. When
 Agamemnon weeps, in the ninth of the Iliad, his tears are
 compared to a fountain of water falling from a rock ; but
 women being more profuse of tears, those of Penelope are
 here compared to a river.

V. 244. *She to her present lord laments him lost.*]
 Dacier observes that this is added by Homer not for our
 information, for we already know it ; but because it is a
 reflection which must necessarily occur to every reader :

With'ring at heart to see the weeping fair,
His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;

It is a thing extraordinary to lament a person present, as if he were absolutely lost; and we reap a double satisfaction from the relation; by observing the behaviour of Penelope towards Ulysses, and of Ulysses towards Penelope; while he is at the same time in one sense both absent and present.

v. 247. *His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare.*]

There is a beautiful contrast between Ulysses and Penelope; Penelope indulges her passion for Ulysses, Ulysses restrains his for Penelope: the picture of Ulysses is drawn to the life; he is assaulted at once with several passions, astonishment and admiration on the one side, and compassion and a desire to comfort Penelope on the other; these passions being in an equal balance, and exerting an equal force, he remains fixed, like a wave driven by contrary winds, and yields to neither of their impulses; it is thus Ulysses continues in a steady admiration, as if he had lost all thought. This passage is too beautiful not to have been explained by the ancients: Plutarch quotes it as an instance of the command a wise man ought to have over his passions. 'Ulysses who was the most eloquent yet was the most silent of men, all his faculties were obedient, and subject to reason, he commanded his eyes not to weep, his tongue not to speak, and his very heart not to pant or tremble: his reason influenced even his inward motions, and subdued the very blood and vital spirit.' And in his treatise of Moral Virtues, he again quotes these verses: 'Ulysses had completely subjected all his faculties to right reason, and he held even his spirits, his blood, and his tears under the government of his judgment.' Virgil paints Dido in the infernal shades almost in the same colours with Ulysses.

*Illā solo fixos oculos averſa tenebat,
Nec magis incepto vultum ſermone movetur
Quam ſi dura ſilex, aut ſiet Marpeſſa cautes.*

Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
 Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
 Firm wisdom interdicts the soft'ning tear.
 A speechless interval of grief ensues,
 'Till thus the queen the tender theme renews.

250

Stranger! that e'er thy hospitable roof
 Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof!
 Delineate to my view my warlike lord,
 His form, his habit, and his train record.

355

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden sight
 Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight:
 Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,
 Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd:
 But what I can, receive——In ample mode,
 A robe of military purple flow'd

260

v. 248. *Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear.*] Eustathius informs us, that Homer applied this image of horny, or *κερατοειδής*, to the eye, because one of the coats of it is said to be of an *horny* substance; but this is merely fanciful: if another tunic of the eye had been *steely*, there might have been some ground for the allusion; for Homer joins both of them in the illustration, and only meant to represent the steadfastness of the eye of Ulysses, in this affecting interview.

v. 262. etc. *A robe of military purple, etc.*] This is a remarkable passage, and gives us an exact description of the habit of a king in the days of Homer, or perhaps still earlier in the days of Ulysses. Purple seems antiently to have been appropriated to kings, and to them on whom they bestowed it; thus Judges viii. 26. the sacred historian mentions purple rayment that was on the kings of Midian. Thus Esther viii. 15. a garment of fine linen and purple is given to a favourite by king Ahasuerus; and

O'er all his frame : illustrious on his breast,

The double-clasping gold the king confest.

In the rich woof a hound Mosaic drawn

265

Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappled fawn :

Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold ;

They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.

Fine as a filmy web beneath it shone

A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun :

270

The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,

In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.

A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,

I gave, enamell'd with Vulcanian art :

Maccabees xliii. the Jews made a decree, that Simon should wear purple and gold, and that none of the people should wear purple or a buckle of gold without his permission, in token that he was the chief magistrate of the Jews ; thus also Mac. x. 89. Alexander sent Jonathan a buckle of gold, as the use is to be given to such as are of the king's blood. Ulysses is here dress'd much after the same manner, he wears purple, and a buckle or clasp of gold, as a sign of his regality. But what I would chiefly observe is, that the art of embroidery was known in these early ages, nay perhaps was in greater perfection than at this day ; the embroidery was of divers colours, as we may gather from the epithet applied to the fawn, ποικίλον. Some persons indeed tell us, that this was inwoven into the cloth, and was made in the loom ; but the words of Homer will admit of the other interpretation. and it is evident that embroidery was known amongst the orientals in the age of Ulysses, from Judges v. 20. *Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey, to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks*

A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest, 275
 Dimension'd equal to his size, express
 Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.
 A fav'rite herald in his train I knew,
 His visage solemn sad, of sable hue :
 Short woolly curls o'erfleec'd his bending head, 280
 O'er which a promontory shoulder spread :
 Eurybates ! in whose large soul alone
 Ulysses view'd an image of his own.

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd ;
 In all he told she recognis'd her lord : 285

of them that take the spoil ? Here is evidently mention made of embroidery, and perhaps such was this robe of Ulysses ; but however this be, it is manifest that all manner of creatures were figured upon the habit of great personages, and that those creatures were inwrought so naturally as to seem to be alive.

v. 275.

———radiant vest,

Dimension'd equal to his size———]

It may be asked, what is the meaning of the *τετραίοντα χιῶνα* here mentioned by Ulysses ? Eustathius explains it by *σύνμετρος*, that is, neither too long nor too short, too wide or too scanty, but exactly corresponding to the make of the body. Hesiod uses the same word in the same sense : and Hesychius interprets it in the same manner, "Ευμήτρον, καὶ μέγεθός τῶν ποδῶν τετραμίσθονον. Dacier.

v. 278. *A fav'rite herald*———] This is very artful in Ulysses : Penelope had asked what kind of person her husband was ; Ulysses fears to give a description of himself, lest by drawing the copy like the original now before the eyes of Penelope, she should discover him to be Ulysses : he therefore diverts the enquiry, yet at the same time satisfies her curiosity, by adding a new circumstance to confirm his veracity, by describing his attendant and herald Eurybates. Dacier.

But when the storm was spent in plenteous show'rs,
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd pow'rs,
 O thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
 With all thy wants the name of poor shall end; 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!

The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold emboss,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blisful bow'r enjoy'd: 295

The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return!

Then he, with pity touch'd: O royal dame!
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim. 300

I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace:
 Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend; 305
 Truth forms my tale; to pleasing truth attend.

The royal object of your dearest care,
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air:
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd: 310

Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store!
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the God of day,

Were doom'd by Jove, and Phœbus' just decree, 315
To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.

To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,

And rode the storm; 'till by the billows tost,
He landed on the fair Phæacian coast. 320

That race, who emulate the life of gods,
Receive him joyous to their blest abodes :

Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.

But your wise lord, (in whose capacious soul 325
High schemes of pow'r in just succession roul.)

His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,
'Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.

Phedon the fact affirm'd whose sovereign sway
Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey : 330

And bade the gods this added truth attest,
(While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)

v. 327. *His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,*

'Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.]

Ulysses amassed great riches by being driven from country to country : every prince where he arrived made him great presents, according to the laudable customs of hospitality in former ages. The word in the Greek (observes Dacier) is ἀγυεκάζειν; it is borrowed from beggars, who by strolling from place to place get their livelihood; and hence it was made use of simply to amass, or make collections. Hesychius explains it by συλλέγει, πολιζει, ἐγείρει; in which words there are two errors and it is manifest they are corrupted: Monsieur le Fevre reads πτωχίζει, ἀγείρει; Dacier.

That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
To waft the hero to his natal land.

for Dulichium urge the wat'ry way, 335

But first the Ulyssæan wealth survey :

So rich the value of a store so vast

Demands the pomp of centuries to waste !

The darling object of your royal love,

Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove ; 340

By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,

To form the conduct of his great design :

Irresolute of soul, his state to shrowd

In dark disguise, or come, a king avow'd ?

Thus lives your lord ; nor longer doom'd to roam : 345

Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.

By Jove, the source of good, supreme in pow'r !

By the blest genius of this friendly bow'r !

I ratify my speech ; before the sun

His annual longitude of heav'n shall run ; 350

We may observe that Ulysses gives himself great commendations through this whole interview ; he calls himself *δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς*, and says, that there were few men in the world like him ; that he was *θεοῖς ἰσχυρίαιος*, or like the gods : this is not a sign of vanity or ostentation, since Ulysses speaks in the character of a stranger : he must therefore speak in the same manner as a stranger would have spoke ; that is, with honour of Ulysses, to ingratiate himself with Penelope. Besides, this conduct conduces to persuade Penelope, that he is the person he pretends to be, and by the consequence contributes to prevent a discovery.

When the pale empress of yon' starry train
 In the next month renews her faded wane,
 Ulysses will assert his rightful reign.

What thanks ! what boon ! reply'd the queen, are due,
 When time shall prove the storied blessing true: 355

My lord's return should fate no more retard,
 Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.

But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage,
 The wounds of Destiny's relentless rage
 I long must weep ! nor will Ulysses come, 360

With royal gifts to send you honour'd home !——

Your other task, ye menial train, forbear :

Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare ;

With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn :

Up-rising early with the purple morn, 365

v. 363. *Now wash the stranger, etc.*] This was one of the first rites of hospitality observed towards strangers, amongst the ancients. The scriptures abound with instances of it : Abraham offers water to wash the feet of the angels whom he mistook for strangers, *etc.* There was also a bath for the stranger, but this seems to have been a greater honour (as Dacier observes) than that of washing the feet ; this may be gathered from the manner in which it was performed ; the daughters of the family, even young princesses, assisted at the bath ; but the washing the feet was an office committed to servants : thus the daughter of Nestor in the third Odyssey bathed Telemachus, but Ulysses being disguised like a beggar, Euryclea washes his feet. This agrees exactly with another passage of scripture ; when David sent to ask Abigail to wife, 1 Sam. xxv. 41. she made answer, *Let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.* My memory fails me, if there be any other passage, either

His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.

Then with Telemachus the social feast

Partaking free, my sole invited guest;

Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due,

370

The breach of hospitable right may rue.

The vulgar of my sex I must exceed

In real fame, when most humane my deed:

And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,

If, stranger! I permit that mean attire,

575

Beneath the feastful bow'r. A narrow space

Confines the circle of our destin'd race;

'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.



In the Iliad or Odyssey, where this practice of washing the feet is directly mentioned; the reason is, this was an office performed only to inferior persons; the bath was for heroes and kings. Now both Homer's poems are filled with the characters of such personages, and therefore there was no room to mention it in other places: it is true the word here is *anoxiphars*, and does not necessarily imply the washing of the feet, but washing in general: yet here it is to be understood of the feet, for Euryclea in the act of washing them discovers this stranger to be Ulysses.

v. 376. ———— *A narrow space*

Confines the circle of our destin'd race.] The sense is here cut short, and Homer, like a good painter, leaves something to be supplied by the reader's imagination. Life is short, (says Penelope) we ought therefore to employ it in doing good. The motive indeed which she uses, is not entirely conformable to true theology; she here proposes glory as the sole aim of doing virtuous actions; though in other places Homer plainly asserts, that we ought to act with piety to please the gods. Dacier.

Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues; 380
 By death dis-rob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose in-born worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend;
 The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
 And distant tongues extol the patron-name.

Princes, he cry'd, in vain your bounties flow
 On me, confirm'd, and obstinate in woe,
 When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
 And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew; 390
 These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
 I chose, the livery of a woful mind!
 Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
 With splendid palls, and canopies of state:
 Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
 And catch the glances of the waking morn.
 The delicacy of your courtly train
 To wash a wretched wand'rer wou'd disdain;
 But if, in tract of long experience try'd,
 And sad similitude of woes ally'd, 400

v. 399. *But if, in tract of long experience, etc.*] I will have an old woman to wash me (says Ulysses.) The reason of this request is not evident at first view; but Eustathius explains it by shewing that Ulysses acts thus to avoid the insults and contempt of the younger damsels of Penelope, who had sufficiently outraged him in this and the preceeding book; they would think themselves degraded by performing such an office to a beggar. Eustathius remarks, that some antient critics rejected three verses here:

Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.

Pleas'd with his wife reply, the queen rejoin'd :
Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,

It is absurd, say they, that Ulysses should chuse Euryclea for this office, who was the only person who could discover him, and ruin his designs; he knew she was acquainted with the wound that afterwards discovers him: but the truth is, Ulysses knew Euryclea to be a person of wisdom, and he was in hopes to draw her over to his interest, and make use of her in his affairs in the future parts of the *Odyssey*; and this he does upon many important occasions, in particular in locking up the palace at the time of the battle between him and the suitors; so that by her means he prevents the report of that great incident from being carried to their partizans abroad: here therefore he artfully brings it about, that Euryclea should be assigned to this office, not only to avoid the insults of the other females, but to make use of her faithfulness and wisdom to carry on his designs, and make the way more easy to the suitors destruction. The choice therefore was prudent; she was aged, and acquainted with human miseries, not only by reason of her age, but had herself suffered in all the afflictions of Penelope and Telemachus: we find she is described as a mother to the whole family, and she all along adopts the afflictions of it: Eustathius therefore may perhaps be mistaken when he asserts this to be an instance of ill counsels crowned with good success. But then it may be asked, if Euryclea was a person of such wisdom and fidelity, why does not Ulysses trust her with the secret of his return? the reason is plain, it would not only have been contrary to his cautious nature, but a breach of all decency to trust himself to Euryclea, and not to Penelope; this would in some measure have raised the character of the servant, above that of his wife and queen. Part of this note I am indebted for to M. Dacier.

In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r 405

I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.

Such servants as your humble choice requires,

To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,

New from the birth : and with a mother's hand

His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd; 410

Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind ;

Though now to life's extremeſt verge declin'd,

Of ſtrength ſuperior to the toil aſſign'd. —

Riſe, Euryclea ! with officious care

For the poor friend the cleaning bath prepare : 415

This debt his correſpondent fortunes claim,

Too like Ulyſſes, and perhaps the ſame !

Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now !

For age untimely marks the careful brow.

Instant obſequious to the mild command, 420

Sad Euryclea roſe : with trembling hand

She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes ;

And thus impaſſion'd to herſelf replies.

v. 423. *She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes.*

Dacier obſerves that Aristotle in his third book of Rhetoric quotes this action of Euryclea as an inſtance of a paralogiſm familiar to Homer ; and again in his Poetics, he cites it to the ſame purpoſe : a paralogiſm conſiſts in making uſe of falſe reaſoning, and drawing a falſe conſequence from true premiſſes : “ All men, ſays Aristotle, are naturally perſuaded that where ſuch a thing is, or is done, ſuch another muſt happen ; we may therefore make them eaſily believe that if the laſt is, the firſt muſt conſequently be ; but in reality, the latter which we lay down as truth being often falſe, the former is ſo more frequently ; for it does not follow, that becauſe one

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares !
 What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears ! 425
 Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
 With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid ?
 He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
 Of perfect hecatombs in order slain :
 There oft implor'd his tutelary pow'r, 430
 Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour ;

“ thing is, another must necessarily be ; but because we
 are persuaded of the truth of the latter, we conclude
 “ falsely, that the former is also true.” The reader will
 enter into the meaning of Aristotle, and understand what
 a paralogism is, by an example of it : for instance, if we
 were to prove a man to be in love, we bring it as an ar-
 gument that he is pale : now this is a false reasoning or
 paralogism, because a person may be pale from other rea-
 sons than love. Thus in the instance of Euryclea, ‘ Ho-
 mer (says Aristotle) imposes upon his reader, by men-
 tioning a sign that is known, to draw a consequence from
 it, to prove a thing that is not known ;’ that is, Homer
 endeavours to prove that the whole story concerning Eu-
 ryclea is true, and that she really hid her eyes when she
 wept, because this is a consequence of passion, and because
 it is natural for persons to conceal their eyes with their
 hands while they weep. This also is a paralogism, for
 every syllable concerning Euryclea may be a fiction of the
 poet, though such a gesture is natural to a person in her
 circumstances ; the imposition consists in this, namely, in
 the art of the poet in endeavouring to deceive us into a
 belief, that because persons when they weep conceal
 their eyes, therefore it is true that Euryclea thus actual-
 ly wept ; the latter may be evidently false, though the
 former be true : Aristotle brings this practice of Homer
 as an example to all poets how to tell lies as they ought,
 or agreeably.

That form'd for empire with paternal care,

His realm might recognize an equal heir.

O destin'd head ! The pious vows are lost ;

His God forgets him on a foreign coast !——

435

Perhaps, like thee, poor guest ! in wanton pride

The rich insult him, and the young deride !

Conscious of worth revil'd, thy gen'rous mind

The friendly rite of purity declin'd ;

My will concurring with my queen's command,

440

Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.

v. 434. — *The pious vows are lost ;
His God forgets him——*]

Euryclea we see is astonished to find that a person who is remarkable for his piety should be unfortunate ; the age was not enlightened enough to know that calamity is often a proof of virtue, and a trial, not a punishment. Maximus Tyrius, the Platonic, 22. *dissert.* excellently explains this subject : ‘ Who (says that author) can deny ‘ Ulysses to be a man of piety ? Jupiter remembers him, ‘ Minerva loves him, Mercury guides him, Calypso is enamoured with him, and Leucothea saves his life ! Who ‘ then can deny but that heaven tried him with all his ‘ afflictions, that he might appear to be, and deserve to ‘ be, called a good man ? this is the reason why he suffered at Troy, from the suitors, by the Cyclops, by ‘ Circe, and by shipwreck : this is the reason why he wandered as a vagabond, and a beggar ; that he was half ‘ naked, that he was struck and insulted, and suffered a ‘ thousand insolencies from the riots of the suitors : it was ‘ the favour and love of heaven that brought him into all ‘ these afflictions, and not the anger of Neptune.’ When a good man suffers, heaven frequently chuses him out as an hero, who knows how to behave bravely in the day of adversity, and this is agreeable to true theology.

A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast ;
 In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd :
 Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
 None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost. 445

Thus half discover'd thro' the dark disguise,
 With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies :
 You join your sufferage to the public vote ;
 The same you think, have all beholders thought.

He said : replenish'd from the purest springs, 450
 The laver strait with busy care she brings :
 In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
 The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
 Mean-time revolving in his thoughtful mind
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd ; 455
 His face averting from the crackling blaze,
 His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays.

v. 443. *In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd, etc.*]
 Homer continually draws his reflections from the present
 object : Penelope, at the sight of this distressed and ill-
 clothed stranger, breaks out into a tender sentiment. and
 cries, " Perhaps my Ulysses is such as he!" for thus Eu-
 stathius applies the expression, *ὁ τοιοῦτος ἢ φύσει ἀλλὰ διὰ
 κακῶσιν* ; that is, " he was not such by nature, but mis-
 fortune : " But if we understand it of a bodily resem-
 blance, the sentiment is still beautiful, and the reader can-
 not without pleasure see Penelope deceived in comparing
 Ulysses with Ulysses. Dacier.

v. 447. ——— *the chief replies.*] This is very
 artful in Ulysses : if he had denied the resemblance, it
 might have given suspicion ; he therefore confesses it, and
 by confessing it persuades Euryclea that he is not the real
 Ulysses. Dacier.

v. 457. *His face averting from the crackling blaze.*]

Thus cautious, in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
 The curious search of Euryclea's eye. 460
 Cautious in vain ! nor ceas'd the dame to find
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

The reason why Ulysses turns toward the darkness is to avoid discovery, and that Euryclea might not examine him too curiously ; but this is not the whole design of Homer ; the poet thus describes Ulysses to give probability to the future story ; for as Eustathius judiciously remarks, it is from this action alone that the fainting of Euryclea, her laying her hand on the chin of Ulysses, his seizure of her throat to hinder her from discovering him, escape the notice of Penelope ; Ulysses is seated out of view, and withdrawn from observation. Dacier.

v. 461. *Cautious in vain ! nor ceas'd the dame to find
 The scar———]*

This story, concerning the wound of Ulysses, may, I fear in some parts of it seem somewhat tedious ; it may therefore be necessary to shew that it is introduced with judgment ; and though not entirely entertaining, yet artful.

Aristotle in the eighth *chap.* of his Poetics, speaking of the unity of the action of the *Odyssey*, mentions this wound of Ulysses. Homer, says he, who excelled other poets in all respects, seems perfectly to have known this defect, (*viz.* that all the actions of an hero do not constitute the unity of the action, but only such as are capable to be united with the fable ;) for in composing his *Odyssey*, he has not mentioned all the adventures of Ulysses : for example, he has not joined the wound he received upon Parnassus with the account of his feigned madness, when the Greeks assembled their army ; for because one of them happened, it was neither necessary nor probable that the other should also happen ; but he has inserted all that could have respect to one and the same action. Monsieur Dacier fully explains Aristotle ; we have in this precept (observes that author) two re-

This on Parnassus combating the boar,
 With glancing rage the tusked savage tore.
 Attended by his brave maternal race, 465
 His grandfire sent him to the sylvan chace,

markable events in the life of Ulysses; his feigned madness, and his wound received upon Parnassus: the poet mentions the wound, but is silent about his madness: he saw that the latter had no connexion either in truth or probability with the subject of his poem, and therefore he says not a word of it: he has acted otherwise with respect to the wound received upon Parnassus; for although that wound was no more to the matter of his poem, than the madness, yet he speaks of it, because he found an opportunity of inserting it so naturally into his principal action, that it becomes a necessary part of it, since it causes a remembrance of his hero, that is since it is the occasion of Euryclea's discovering Ulysses; so that this history which is here related at length is no foreign episode, but a natural part of the subject, by being thus artfully united to it. This fully teaches us of what nature the different parts which a poet uses to form one and the same action ought to be; namely, either necessary or probable consequences of one another, as the remembrance of Ulysses was of this wound: every adventure then that has not this connexion ought to be rejected as foreign, and as breaking the unity of the action: and therefore Homer took care not to interrupt the unity of his *Odyssey*, by the episode of the feigned madness of Ulysses; for that incident could not be produced by any that were necessary or proper to the poem, nor produce any that had the least relation to it.

Bosfu fully agrees with Aristotle and Dacier, and gathers from this episode that some incidents which make not directly any part of the action or the fable may be inserted into a poem, if those incidents are necessary to clear up any part of the fable or action.

This remembrance, or discovery by the wound, is

Autolycus the bold : (a mighty name
For spotless faith, and deeds of martial fame :

mentioned in another place ; see the twenty-first *Odyssey*. Aristotle in his seventeenth *chap.* of the *Poetics* prefers this remembrance to that there made to Eumæus ; it is (observes that author) here managed with more address and art ; it is done without design, and seems a consequence of the story : there Ulysses himself discovers the wound ; here it arises from the subject, and a series of incidents : there Ulysses has recourse to it, and it causes no surprize, because there is no great art in shewing a mark, which we are willing to have known. All remembrances therefore (says Aristotle) which produce their effects by design have little ingenuity : whereas those which are brought about by chance, surprize us, and are instances of the poet's art and address.

v. 467. *Autolycus the bold : (a mighty name
For spotless faith———]*

This difficult passage is well explained by Dacier and Eustathius : the words are

—— ὃς ἀνθρώπους ἐξίκατο

Κλεπτοσύνην δ' ὅρκων τε——

which literally run thus, “ he surpassed all men in swearing and stealing :” a terrible character ! if it were to be understood according to the letter : it has been imagined, that Homer commends Autolycus for his address in robbery, and making equivocal oaths ; like the person (says Eustathius) who made a truce with his enemies for several days, and immediately went and ravaged their territories by night, and defended it, by telling them that the truce was not made for the night but the day : or like the person mentioned by Athenæus, who stole a fish, and gave it to his neighbour, and being questioned about it swore, that he had it not himself, nor saw any other person steal it : but this is not the meaning of Homer, for

Hermes his patron-god those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he went to load.] 476

he calls Autolycus ἑσθλος or a *good man*, and adds that this κλεπτοσύνη καὶ ἔρχος, was the gift of a god. The truth is, the former word does not here signify theft, nor the latter perjury: the former signifies a laudable address in concealing our own designs, and discovering those of our enemies; it consists in surprising them, when they least expect us, in beating up their quarters, carrying off their convoys, their provisions, and in short in all manner of stratagems, authorized by the laws of war: ἔρχος signifies fidelity in observing an oath, and never violating the sanctity of it. Plato in his first book de repub. makes it plain, that this is the sense of Homer: he therefore quotes this passage, and asserts that he is the best guardian of an army who knows how to steal the counsels and enterprises of the enemy, τὰ τῶν πολεμίων κλέψαι βουλευμένα, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας πράξεις; from this, it is there inferred, that justice is a kind of chicanery (κλεπτική τις ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ φίλων, καὶ βλάβῃ τῶν ἐχθρῶν) by which we serve our friends, and bring detriment to our enemies; but the answer there given to this assertion is, ἔμὰ τὸν Διῶ, or, by no means: it must be understood with some restriction: it is lawful to deceive an enemy in war, but in common life criminal. The qualities therefore that Homer commends in Autolycus, are his dexterity in discovering, penetrating and preventing the designs of his enemies, and the religious observance of his oaths, and not theft and perjury: Eustathius explains Homer by adding κλεπτοσύνην ἔκακην, ἔρχον ἔ φαῦλον.

v. 469. *Hermes his patron-god those gifts bestow'd.]*

The reason why Homer attributes these gifts to Mercury is, because he was the president of secrecy, or of all things that are acted with a desire of concealment. He is also the god of speech, it therefore appertained to that deity to guard the verity of it, in particular of oaths, being the president of speaking. Dacier.

His course to Ithaca this hero sped,
 When the first product of Laertes' bed
 Was new disclos'd to birth : the banquet ends,
 When Euryclea from the queen descends,
 And to his fond embrace the babe commends. 475
 " Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son ;
 " And name the blessing that your pray'rs have won.
 Then thus the hoary chief. " My victor arms
 " Have aw'd the realms around with dire alarms :

v. 476. "*Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son, etc.*] We have here an antient custom observed by the Greeks : the child was placed by the father upon the grandfather's knees, as a token that a grandchild was the most agreeable present that a son could make to a father. That this was an antient custom is evident from the Iliad,

————— συγίρας δ' ἐπιέκλειτ' Ἐρινύς
 Μήποτε γέναισιν οἷσιν ἐφέσσειται φίλον υἱόν
 Ἐξ ἐμῶν γενναῦτα —————

That is, the father of Phoenix imprecated the Furies, that Phoenix might never have a son to place upon his grandfather's knees.

It has been already remarked that it was customary in Greece for the parents to name the child ; here the grandfather names Ulysses : but this is done by permission of the parents ; for Autolycus bids them give the name.

Γαμβρὸς ἐμὸς θυγάτηρ τε τίθειθ' ὄνομ'. ———

Ulysses was called Ὀδυσσεύς, from Ὀδῶσα, *Iraſcor* ; implying (says Eustathius) that many hated, or were enraged at, Autolycus, for the mischiefs he had done by his art in war, ἐκ τῆς μίσους διὰ κλεψισύνης ; that is in other words, Autolycus called Ulysses Ὀδυσσεύς from the terror he had been to his enemies.

" A sure memorial of my dreaded fame 480
 " The boy shall bear, Ulysses be his name!
 " And when with filial love the youth shall come
 " To view his mother's foil, my Delphic dome
 " With gifts of price shall send him joyous home.

Lur'd with the promis'd boon, when youthful prime 485
 Ended in man, his mother's natal clime

Ulysses sought; with fond affection dear
 Amphithea's arms receiv'd the royal heir:

Her antient * lord an equal joy posselt;

Instant he bade prepare the genial feast: 490

A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled,

Whose stately growth five flow'ry summers fed:

His sons divide, and roast with artful care

The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.

Nor ceas'd discourse (the banquet of the soul) 495

'Till Phœbus wheeling to the western goal

Reign'd the skies, and night involv'd the pole.

Their drooping eyes the slumb'rous shade oppress,

Sated they rose, and all retir'd to rest.

Soon as the morn new-rob'd in purple light, 500

Pierc'd with her golden shafts the rear of night;

Ulysses, and his brave maternal race

The young Autolyçi, assay the chace.

Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades, 504

With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades;

What time the sun from Ocean's peaceful stream,

Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.

* Autolycus.

The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale ;
 The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail :
 And foremost of the train, his cornel spear 510
 Ulysses way'd, to rouse the savage war.
 Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood :
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thund'rous show'r,
 Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bow'r, 515
 With wither'd foilage strew'd, a heapy store !
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rous'd by the hounds and hunters' mingling cries,
 The savage from his leafy sounder flies :
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine, 520
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine.
 Young Ithacus advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his lifted lance in act to throw :
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed ! 525
 His tusks oblique he aim'd the knee to goar ;
 Aloope they glanc'd, the finewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone : Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubled force the wound repay'd ;
 To the right shoulder joint the spear apply'd, 530
 His farther flank with streaming purple dy'd :
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain ;
 With joy, and vast surprize, th' applauding train
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain. }
 With bandage firm Ulysses knee they bound ; 535
 Then chaunting mystic lays, the closing wound

v. 536. *Then chaunting mystic lays, the closing wound
Of sacred melody confess'd the force.*]

This is a remarkable instance of the antiquity of that idle superstition of curing wounds by incantation or charms: yet Homer is no way blameable for mentioning it; he wrote according to the opinion of the age, which whether true or false vindicates him as a poet. Indeed almost all other poets have spoken more boldly than Homer of the power of incantations; thus Virgil,

*Carmina vel cælo possunt deducere lunam,
Carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulyssæi
Frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.*

But we may defend Homer from Pliny, who has thought this point, viz. whether charms are available physically, worthy of a serious discussion; he refers to this passage in his natural History, lib. 28. cap. 1. *Dixit Homerus pro-
fusum sanguinis vulnerato femine Ulyssæm inhibuisse
carmine, Theophrastus, Isciadicos sanari, Cato prodidit
Luxatis membris carmen auxiliari, Varro Podagris.* Attalus affirms, that if a man chance to spy a scorpion, and pronounce the word *duo*, it will lie still, and never root his sting. I think these grave authors could even the fictions of poets; and I hardly believe any of them would have ventured to provoke a serpent, trusting to the charm. But we are to understand this charm not merely as a form of words, but as joined with some musical notes, and then it may appear more rational: for the cure of the sciatica, Theophrastus commends the Phrygian music, and A. Gellius for giving ease to it; but adds, *ut memorie produm* &c. Apollonius in his book de Miris, affirms from Theophrastus, that music cures many diseases both of mind and body, *καθάπερ λειποθυμίας, φόβους, καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ μακρόν,
ἀγνομένας τῆς διανοίας ἐκστάσεις, ἰᾶται δὲ καταδύλησις ἰσ-
χυράδα καὶ ἐπίληψιν.* And the same author affirms, that many in his time, especially the Thebans, used the pipe for the cure of several sickness, which Galen calls *καταδύ-*

Of sacred melody confess'd the force;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
 Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim;
 Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame; 540
 Confirm'd the cure: and from the Delphic dome
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
 He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
 Relates the chace, and early praise atchiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee inleam'd, remain'd the scar: 545
 Which noted token of the woodland war
 When Euryclea found, the ablution ceas'd;
 Down dropt the leg, from her slack hand releas'd;
 The mingled fluids from the vase redound;
 The vase reclining floats the floor around! 550
 Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express
 Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.

Δεν τῷ τῶπι, super loco affecto tibia canere; or loca dolentia decantare. I will not affirm that such charms of music have no power in some maladies; every one knows what an effect the harp of David had over the spirits of Saul; but we have either lost, or not yet found out the art: a natural reason may be assigned for it: for as the musical notes move the air, so the air moves the inward spirits, and the humours of the body, which are the seat of diseases: so that by this new motion they may be condensed, rarified, dissipated or expelled, according as they are agitated or influenced by the concussion of the musical notes; but however this be, if other poets may say that charms have power to stop rivers in their courses, Homer is not to be condemned for ascribing the power of stopping blood to incantations. See Mr. Cowley's Notes on the first book of his Davideis.

Her flutt'ring words in melting murmurs dy'd;
 At length abrupt—my son!—my king!—she cry'd.
 His neck with fond embrace infolding fast, 553
 Fall on the queen her raptur'd eyes she cast,
 Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd:
 But studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present bliss abstracts her thought. 560

v. 554. —*abrupt—my son!—my king!—she cry'd.*]

It may seem incredible that this dialogue between Ulysses and Euryclea could be held in the presence of Penelope, and she not hear it: how is this to be reconciled to probability? I will answer in the words of Eustathius: the poet, says he, has admirably guarded against this objection; it is for this reason that he mentions the falling of Ulysses's leg into the water, the found of the vessel from that accident, the overturning of it, and the effusion of the water: all these different sounds may easily be supposed to drown the voice of Euryclea, so as it might not be heard by Penelope; it is true, she could not but observe this confusion that happened while Euryclea washes; but the age of Euryclea might naturally make her believe that all this happened by accident thro' her feeble-ness, and Penelope might be persuaded that it was thus occasioned, having no reason to suspect the truth: besides, what is more frequent on the theatre than to speak to the audience, while the persons on the stage are supposed not to hear? in reality, it is evident that Ulysses and Euryclea were at a proper distance from Penelope, probably out of decency, while the feet were washing; for as soon as that office is over, Homer tells us that Ulysses drew nearer to the fire where Penelope sat, that he might resume the conference.

Ἀντίς ἂρ' ἀσποτέρῃ πύρρος ἔλκετο δίφρῳ Ὀδυσσεύς.

His hand to Euryclea's mouth apply'd,

Art thou foredoom'd my pest? the hero cry'd:

Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd;

And have the fates thy babling age ordain'd

To violate the life thy youth sustain'd? 565

An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,

Full twenty annual suns in distant skies:

At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast

To know thy king, and here I stand confest.

This heav'n-discover'd truth to thee consign'd, 570

Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind:

Else if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,

And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train;

With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age

Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage. 575

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear:

What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe?

Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd,

With ribs of steel, and marble heart immur'd.

v. 578. *Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd.*

Plutarch, in his treatise upon garrulity, observes, that Ulysses and every person that had relation to him were remarkable for their taciturnity: they had all profited under so great a master of secrecy as Ulysses; it is practis'd by his wife, his son, and his nurse; his very companions, who attended him in his voyages, possess'd this virtue in so eminent a degree as to suffer themselves to be dashed in pieces by the Cyclops, rather than discover him to that giant. The moral that we are to gather from this fable is, that the safety of princes' counsels consists in secrecy. Dacier.

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

49

When heav'n, auspicious to thy right avow'd, 580

Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd;

The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair;

The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.

Thy aid avails me not, the chief reply'd;
My own experience shall their doom decide; 585

A witness-judge precludes a long appeal:

Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.

He said: obsequious with redoubled pace,

She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase:

The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil 590

With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil.

Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,

His former seat receiv'd the stranger-guest;

Whom thus with pensive air the queen address. }
Tho' night, dissolving grief in grateful ease, 595

Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize;

Awhile, reluctant to her pleasing force,

Suspend the restless hour with sweet discourse.

The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy !)

My menials, and domestic cares employ : 600

591. *With plenteous unction*——] We are not to imagine that the custom of anointing the feet was an instance of luxury; it prevailed over the oriental world solely out of necessity, to avoid offensiveness in those hot regions. This custom prevailed many ages after Homer, and we have an instance of it in the woman who washed the feet of our Lord and Saviour with tears, and anointed them with oil. This place is a plain proof that oil was used after washing the feet as well as after bathing.

And, unattended by sincere repose,
 The night afflicts my ever-wakeful woes :
 When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
 My echoing griefs the starry vault invade,
 As when the months are clad in flow'ry green, 605
 Sad Philomel, in bow'ry shades unseen,
 To vernal airs attunes her varied strains ;
 And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains :

v. 606. *Sad Philomel, etc.*] This passage is thus explained by Eustathius. The simile is not only introduced to express the sorrow of Penelope, but the nature of it : it is not so much intended to illustrate her grief, as her various agitations and different thoughts compared to the different accents in the mournful song of the nightingale ; for thus Homer applies it.

Ὡς καὶ ἐμοὶ δίχα θυμὸς ὀρώρεται ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.

Eustathius adds, that Homer relates this story very differently from later authors : he mentions nothing of Progne, Tereus, or Pandion, unless that name be the same with Pandareus ; Itylus likewise is by them called Itys. The story is thus, according to these writers : Philomela was the wife of Tereus king of Thrace ; she had a sister named Progne, whom Tereus ravished and cut her tongue out, that she might not discover the crime to Philomela ; but Progne betrayed it by weaving the story in a piece of embroidery ; upon this Philomela slew her own son Itys or Itylus, and served up his flesh to the table of her husband Tereus ; which being made known to him, he pursues Philomela and Progne, who are feigned to be changed into birds for their swift flight into Athens, by which they escaped the revenge of Tereus. Philomela is fabled to be turned into a nightingale, and Progne into a swallow ; it being observed by Pausanias, that no swallow ever builds in Thrace, or nightingale is ever seen there, as hat-

Book XIX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

51

Young Itylus, his parents darling joy !

Whom chance mis-led the mother to destroy : 610

Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy

So in nocturnal solitude forlorn,

A sad variety of woes I mourn !

My mind reflective, in a thorny maze

Devious, from care to care incessant strays. 615

Now, wav'ring doubt succeeds to long despair ;

Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere ;

And joining to my son's my menial train,

Partake his councils, and assist his reign ?

Or, since mature in manhood, he deplores 620

His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores ;

Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord ;

And from the peers select the noblest lord ;

ing the country of Tereus. But Homer follows a different history : Pandareus son of Merops had three daughters, Merope, Cleothera, and Aedon : Pandareus married his eldest daughter Aedon to Zethus brother of Amphion, mentioned in the eleventh Odyssey ; she had an only son named Itylus ; and being envious at the numerous family of her brother-in-law Amphion, she resolves to murder Amaleus the eldest of her nephews. Her own son Itylus was brought up with the children of Amphion, and lay in the same bed with this Amaleus. Aedon directs her son Itylus to absent himself one night from the bed, but he forgets her orders ; at the time determined, she conveys herself into the apartment, and murders her own son Itylus, by mistake, instead of her nephew Amaleus : upon this, almost in distraction, she begs the gods to remove her from the race of human-kind ; they grant her prayer, and change her into a nightingale.

So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride—— 635
A visionary thought I'll now relate,
Illustrate, if you know, the shadowed fate.

A team of twenty geese (a snow-white train !)
Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
Amuse my penfive hours. The bird of Jove 630
Fierce from his mountain-eyrie down-ward drove;
Each fav'rite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream,
To view their death thus imag'd in a dream : 635
With tender sympathy to sooth my'soul,
A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole;
But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd :

Perch'd on the battlements he thus began, 640
(In form an eagle, but in voice a man.)
O queen ! no vulgar vision of the sky.
I come, prophetic of approaching joy :
View in his plummy form thy victor lord;
The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd, 645
Portend the suitors fated to my sword.
This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd;
When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
Fast by the limpid lake my swanlike train
I found, insatiate of the golden grain. 650

The vision self explain'd (the chief replies)
Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies :

Ulysses speaks his own return decreed;
And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the task, and rare, the queen rejoin'd,
Impending destinies in dreams to find:
Immur'd within the silent bow'r of Sleep,
Two portals firm the various phantoms keep

v. 657. *Immur'd within the silent bow'r of Sleep, etc.*]

This seems to be a bold fiction, and commentators have laboured hard to shew the reason of it: some imagine, that by the horn is meant a tunic of the eye, which is called horny; and that the ivory represents the teeth: and that by these allusions the poet intended to express that what we hear spoken may be false, but what we see must infallibly be true: that is, according to this fable, the ivory gate emits falsehood, that of horn, truth. Others explain Homer by referring to the nature of horn and ivory, horn being pervious to the sight, and ivory impenetrable. Dacier, from Eustathius, gives us a very different solution; by horn which is transparant, Homer means the air, or heavens which are translucent; by ivory, he denotes the earth which is gross and opaque: thus the dreams which come from the earth, that is, through the gate of ivory, are false; those from heaven, or thro' the gate of horn, true. But it may be thought that there are no grounds, from the words of Homer, for such an interpretation. I imagine that this fable is built upon a real foundation, and that there were places called the gates of falsehood and truth: Diodorus Siculus, in his second book, describing the ceremonies concerning the dead, mentions the gates of oblivion, of hatred and lamentation; and then adds, that there are other gates in the same place; namely, in Memphis in Ægypt, that are called the gates of verity, near which there is a statue of justice without an head: now Homer in the twenty fourth Odyssey places the region of dreams in the way to the infer-

Of iv'ry one: whence fit to mock the brain,
Of winged lies a light fantastic train :

660

The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn,
And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horns:
Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.

Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,

665

Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd ;
Delusive semblance. !——But my remnant life
Heav'n shall determine in a gameful strife :

With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
For me the rival archers shall contend.

670

As on the list'd field he us'd to place
Six beams, oppos'd to fix in equal space :

Elanc'd a-far by his unerring art,

Sure thro' fix circlets flew the whizzing dart.

So, when the sun restores the purple day,

675

Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay :

nal shades, and it is past dispute that he borrows all these fables of Styx, Cocytus (that is. of the gates of hatred lamentation, *etc.*) from Ægypt, and places them in hell, after Orpheus, who adapted all his ceremonies according to the rites of burial observed at Memphis, as Diodorus fully proves: if therefore he borrows the fable of the gates of oblivion, *etc.* from Ægypt, why may he not the story of the gates of falsehood and verity? especially since he takes his whole relation concerning hell from the customs of the Ægyptians; and this region of dreams is placed by him in the passage to hell. It may therefore not be impossible but this story of the gates of sleep, may have a real foundation, and be built upon the customs of the Ægyptians.

To him the spousal honour is decreed,
 Who thro' the rings directs the feather'd reed.
 Torn from these walls (where long the kinder pow'rs
 With pomp and joy have wing'd may youthful hours!)
 On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam; 681
 The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
 For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream.

Propose the sportive lot, the chief replies,
 Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize: 685
 Ulysses will surprize the unfinish'd game
 Avow'd, and falsify the suitors' claim.

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd:
 In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
 O'er my suspended woe they words prevail, 690
 I part reluctant from the pleasing tale.

But heav'n that knows what all terrestrials need,
 Repose to night, and toil to day decreed:
 Grateful vicissitude! Yet me withdrawn,
 Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn 695
 Establish'd use enjoins: to rest and joy
 Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
 Mean time instructed is the menial tribe
 Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.

Thus affable, her bow'r the queen ascends; 700
 The sov'reign step a beauteous train attends:
 There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose;
 Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows:
 'Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
 And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed. 705

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THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

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THE ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telcmachus exerts his authority amongst them, notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed:

(The remnants of the spoil the suitor crowd
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd:)

Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste

5

With duteous care a downy carpet cast:

With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.

As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey.

10

Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
 With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
 His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
 Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious balance hung :
 Or instant should he quench the guilty flame
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame ;

v. 12. *With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.*] Eustathius expatiates upon the conduct of these female servants of Penelope. Silence and a decent reserve (remarks that author) is the ornament of the fair sex ; levity and laughter betray them into an unguarded behaviour, and make them susceptible of wanton impressions. The Athenians, as Pausanias informs us, had a temple sacred to Love and Venus the whisperer. Venus was called the whisperer (*ψιθυρος*) because they who there offered up their prayers applied their mouths to the ear of the statue of that goddess, and whispered their petitions ; an intimation, that women ought to govern their tongue, and not let it transgress either by loudness or loquacity. But this no ways affects the ladies of Great Britain ; they speak so well, they should never be silent.

Ulysses, Homer tells us, is almost provoked to kill these females with his own hands : this has been imagined a thought unworthy of an hero. The like objection has been made against Æneas in Virgil (*Æneid* ; lib. 2. ver. 567.

Thus, wand'ring in my way, without a guide,
 The graceless Helen in the porch I spy'd
 Of Vesta's temple : there she lurk'd alone,
 Muffled she sat, and what she could, unknown ;
 Trembling with rage, the strumpet I regard, ;
 Resolv'd to give her guilt the due reward.

Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
And let the peers consummate the disgrace?

This whole passage is said to have been expunged from Virgil by Tucca and Varius; for as Virgil there expresses it,

'Tis true a soldier can small honour gain,
And boast no conquest from a woman slain. Dryden.

But the objection is probably made with too great severity, both against Homer and Virgil. It is no disgrace to the best or bravest man to be subject to such passions as betray him into no unworthy actions: a hero is not supposed to be insensible; he distinguishes himself as such, if he restrains them within the bounds of reason. Both Æneas and Ulysses are fired with a just indignation, and this is agreeable to human nature: but both of them proceed to no outrageous action, and this shews that their passions are governed by superior reason. However this resentment of Ulysses is less liable to objection than that of Æneas: Ulysses subdues his indignation by the reflection of his own reason; but Virgil introduces a machine to compose the spirit of Æneas:

———all shining heav'nly bright,

My mother stood reveal'd before my sight,
She held my hand, the destin'd blow to break, &c.

It may be further added, that the case is very different between Æneas and Ulysses. The persons whom Ulysses intends to punish are his subjects and servants and such a punishment would be no more than an act of justice, as he is their master and king; and we find in the sequel of the *Odyssey*, that he actually inflicts it. It should therefore be thought an instance of Homer's judgment, in painting the disorders of these servants in such strong colours, that we may acknowledge the justice, when he afterwards brings them to punishment.

Round his swol'n heart the murm'rous fury rows;

As o'er her young the mother mastiff growls,

20

And bays the stranger groom : so wrath compest
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.

Poor suff'ring heart ! he cry'd, support the pain

Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.

v. 20. *As o'er her young the mother mastiff growls,*
etc.] This in the original is a very bold expression, but
Homer, to soften it, instances a comparison, which recon-
ciles us to it. Ennius has literally translated it, as Spon-
danus observes :

———*animusque in pectore latrat.*

That is word for word,

———*Κραδίη δέ οἱ ἔνδον ὑλάκεται.*

The similitude itself is very expressive ; as the mastiff
barks to guard her young, so labours the soul of Ulysses
in defence of his son and wife, Penelope and Telemachus.
Dacier was afraid that the comparison could not be ren-
dered with any beauty in the French tongue, and there-
fore has substituted another in the room of it, *Son cœur*
rugissoit au dedans de lui, comme un lion rugit autour
d'une bergerie, ou il ne scauroit entrer. But however
more noble the lion may be than the mastiff, it is evident
that she utterly deviates from the allusion : the mastiff
rages in defence of her young, Ulysses of his son Telema-
chus ; but how is this represented by a lion roaring round
a fold, which he is not to defend, but to destroy ? We
have therefore chosen to follow Homer in the more hum-
ble but more expressive similitude ; and what will entire-
ly reconcile us to it, is the great honour which was paid
to dogs by the ancients : they were kept as a piece of
state by princes and heroes, and therefore a comparison
drawn from them was held to be as noble as if it had
been drawn from a lion.

Not fiercer woes thy fortitude could foil

25

When the brave partners of thy ten years toil

Dire Polypheme devour'd: I then was freed

By patient prudence, from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,

Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost;

30

Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd:

As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,

v. 23. *Poor suffering heart! he cry'd support the pain
Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.]*

These two verses are quoted by Plato in his *Phædo*, where he treats of the soul's immortality; he makes use of them to prove that Homer understood the soul to be un-compounded and distinct from the body. If the soul, argues that author, were a compounded substance, if it were harmony (as some philosophically assert) she would never act discordantly from the parts which compose it; but we see the contrary; we see the soul guide and govern the parts of which she herself is pretended to be composed; she resists, threatens and restrains our passions, our fears, avarice and anger: in short, the soul speaks to the body as to a substance of a nature entirely different from its own. Homer therefore evidently understood that the soul ought to govern and direct the passions, and that it is of a nature more divine than harmony.

This is undoubtedly very just reasoning: and there is an expression, observes Dacier, that bears the same import in the holy scriptures: "The heart of David smote him when he numbered the people." There is this difference in Homer by *heart* is understood the corporeal substance, in the scriptures the spiritual; but both make a manifest distinction between the soul and the body.

v. 32. *As one who long, etc.]* No passage in the whole *Odyssey* has fallen under more ridicule than this

The fav'ry cates on glowing embers cast
Incessant turns, in patient for repast :

comparison. Monsieur Perault is particularly severe upon it: Homer (says that critic) compares Ulysses turning in his bed to a black pudding broiling on a gridiron; whereas the truth is, he compares that hero turning and tossing in his bed, burning with impatience to satisfy himself with the blood of the suitors, to a man in sharp hunger preparing the entrails of a victim over a great fire; and the agitation represents the agitation of Ulysses. Homer compares not the thing, but the persons.

Boileau, in his notes upon Longinus, answers this objection. It is notorious that the belly of some animals was one of the most delicious dishes amongst the ancients: that the *fumex*, or sow's belly, was boasted of for its excellence by the Romans, and forbidden by a sumptuary law as too voluptuous. Besides, the Greek word used to express a black pudding was not invented in the days of Homer. Ogilby indeed thus renders it :

As one a pudding broiling on the coals.

But you will ask, is not the allusion mean at best, and does it not convey a low image? Monsieur Dacier answers in the negative, in his notes upon Aristotle's Poetics. The comparison is borrowed from sacrifices which yielded blood and fat, and was therefore so far from being despicable, that it was looked upon with veneration by antiquity. Lib. 1. of the Iliad.

On these, in double cawls involved with art,

The choicest morsels lay from every part.

The cawls and the choicest morsels were the fat of the victim, selected as the best part of it, to be offered to the gods. We may find that the thought was noble in the oriental language, for the author of Ecclesiasticus makes use of it, xlvii. 2. "As is the fat taken from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the children of Is-

Book XX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 63

Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd, 35

In self-debate the suitors doom resolv'd.

When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,

From heav'n descends the Jove-born martial maid;

And hov'ring o'er his head in view confess'd,

The goddess thus her fav'rite care address'd. 40

Oh thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes!

Why rowl those eyes unfriended of repose?

Beneath thy palace roof forget thy care;

Blest in thy queen! blest in thy blooming heir!

Whom, to the gods when suppliant fathers bow, 45

They name the standard of their dearest vow.

Just is thy kind reproach (the chief rejoïn'd)

Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,

In contemplation rapt. This hostile crew

What single arm hath prowess to subdue? 50

Or if by Jove's, and thy auxiliar aid,

They're doom'd to bleed; O say, celestial maid!

"rael." And the same allusion, which was used to represent the worth and excellence of David, could be no degradation to Ulysses.

But what is understood by the 'belly of the beast, full of fat and blood?' Boileau is of opinion that those words denote the fat and the blood which are in those parts of an animal naturally; but he is in an error, as appears evidently from these lines, lib. 18. of the Odyssey.

Γαστήρ δ' αἰγῶν κίχρ' ἐν πυρὶ τῆας δ' ἐπὶ δόρπῳ

Κατὰβιβθα κνίσσης τε καὶ ἄματος ἐμπλήσαντες.

Implentes sanguine et pinguedine, in coena deponamus;
a demonstration that Homer intends not the natural fat and blood of the animal.

Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
Nations embattel'd to revenge the slain?

Oh impotence of faith! Minerva cries,
If man on frail unknowing man relies,
Doubt you the gods? Lo Pallas' self descends,
Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.

v. 56. *If man on frail unknowing man relies,
Doubt you the god. &c.]*

There is excellent reasoning in this: if a friend, whom we know to be wise and powerful, advises us, we are ready to follow his instructions; the divine Being gives us his counsel, and we refuse it. Monsieur Dacier observes that Epictetus had this passage in his view, and beautified his morality with it. 'The protection of a prince or potentate (says that author) gives us full tranquillity, and banishes from us all uneasy apprehension. We have an all-powerful Being for our protector, and for our father; and yet the knowledge of it is not sufficient to drive away our fears, inquietudes and discontents.'

What Homer further puts into the mouth of the goddess of wisdom is consonant to sacred verity, and agrees with the language of the holy scripture; Psalm xxvii. 3. "Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid."

The poet almost in every book mentions the destruction of the suitors by the single hand of Ulysses, to reconcile us to it by degrees, that we may not be shocked with the great catastrophe of the poem as incredible: it is particularly judicious to insist upon it in this place in a manner so solemn to prepare us for the approaching event. If the destruction of the suitors should appear humanly improbable by being ascribed solely to Ulysses, it is at least reconcileable to divine probability, and becomes credible through the intervention of a goddess.

In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast;

Tho' myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest; 60

My sure divinity shall bear the shield;

And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.

Now, pay the debt to craving nature due,

Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew;

She ceas'd: ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes; 65

His care dissolves in visionary joys:

The goddess, pleas'd, regains her natal skies. 70

Not so the queen; the downy bands of sleep

By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep;

A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair; 75

Then thus her fate invoc'd, with fervent pray'r.

Diana! speed thy deathful ebon dart,

And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.

Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,

Tost thro' the void, illimitable space: 75

v. 72. *Diana! speed thy deathful ebon dart, etc.*] I doubt not but the reader will be pleas'd with the beauty of this soliloquy. There is an assemblage of tender images and moving complaints, and yet they are such as betray no meanness of spirit. The lamentation of Penelope is the lamentation of a queen and heroine; she mourns, but it is with dignity. The poet makes a good use of her sorrows, and they excellently sustain her character of persevering to elude the addresses of the suitors, when she wishes even to die rather than to yield to them.

But I confess the inserting so many particularities of the daughters of Pandarus, *etc.* greatly lessens the pathetic of this speech.

v. 74. *Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! etc.*] The ancients (says Dacier) were persuad'd that some persons were car-

Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let Ocean shroud !
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphans fair
 Were doom'd to wander thro' the devious air ;
 Thy self untimely and thy comfort dy'd,
 But four celestials both your cares supply'd.
 Venus in tender delicacy rears
 With honey, milk, and wine their infant years :
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind :

ried away by storms and whirlwinds. I would rather imagine such expressions to be entirely figurative and poetical ; it is probable that what gave occasion to these fictions might be no more than the sudden deaths of some persons ; and their disappearance was ascribed, in the language of poetry, to storms and whirlwinds. The Orientals delighted in such bold figures. Job xxvii. 21. " The east wind carrieth him away, and as a storm hurrieth him out of his place." And Isaiah xli. 16. " The wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them."

v. 82. *Venus in tender delicacy rears*

With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years.]

Monsieur Dacier observes upon this passage : Venus is said to feed these infants with wine, milk, and honey ; that is, she nursed them in their infancy, with plenty and abundance. For this is the import of the expression : a land flowing with milk and honey means a land of the greatest fertility, as is evident from the writings of Moses. So the prophet. " Butter and honey shall he eat, till he knows how to refuse the evil and chuse the good ;" that is, till the age of discretion.

v. 84. *Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd*

A form majestic, and sagacious mind.]

It may seem that Homer ascribes improper gifts to this

With shapely growth Diana grac'd their bloom ;

And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.

But whilst to learn their lots in nuptial love,

Bright Cytherea fought the bow'r of Jove ;

80 (The god supreme, to whose eternal eye

50

The registers of fate expanded lie)

Wing'd Harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,

And to the Furies bore a grateful prey.

85 goddess; wisdom is the portion of Minerva, beauty of Venus, why then are they here ascribed to Juno? Spondanus calls this an insolvable difficulty. Dacier explains it by saying, that the beauty of princesses is different from that of persons of an inferior station; their beauty consists in a majesty that is every way great and noble, and strikes with awe, very different from the little affectations and formal softnesses of inferior beauty; the former kind is the gift of Venus to the lower part of the fair sex; the latter is bestowed on princesses and queens, by Juno the regent of the skies.

v. 92. *Wing'd Harpies snatch'd the unguarded charge away.*] It is not evident what is meant by these princesses being carried away by the Harpies: Eustathius thinks that they wandered from their own country, and fell into the power of cruel governesses, whose severities the poet ascribes to the *ἑρινύες*, or *Furies*. Dacier imagines, that these two princesses having seen the unhappy fate of their sister Aedon (who was married to Zethus, and slew her own son) feared a like calamity; and dreading marriage, retired to some distant solitude, where never being heard of, it gave room for the fiction. It must be allowed that the thought excellently agrees with the wishes of Penelope: these princesses were taken away at the point of their marriage; Penelope believes herself to be in the same condition, and wishes to be lost rather than submit to second nuptials. This speech has a further ef-

Be such my lot ! Or thou Diana speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead :
 To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
 When woes the waking sense alone assail,
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends :
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends !
 The night renews the day distracting theme,
 And airy terrors sable ev'ry dream.
 The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought,
 In manly bloom; and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace :
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne,
 In audible laments she breathes her moan :

fest; we find Penelope reduced to the utmost exigency, she has no further subterfuge : the poet therefore judiciously paints this exigency in the strongest colours, to shew the necessity of unravelling the intrigue of the poem in the conclusion of the *Odyssey*.

V. 107. *As when for Troy he left my fond embrace* This little circumstance is not without a good effect ; it shews that the whole soul of Penelope was possessed with the image of Ulysses. Homer adds, ' such as he was ' when he sailed to Troy ;' which is inserted to take off our wonder that she should not discover him ; thus Ulysses in disguise is not like the Ulysses she formerly knew, and now delineates in her imagination. Eustathius.

V. 110. *Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple*

The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear;
 If-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115

Up springing from his couch, with active haste
 The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd:
 (The hide, without, imbib'd the morning air.)
 And thus the gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r.

Jove, and ethereal thrones! with heav'n to friend 120
 Of the long series of my woes shall end;
 Of human race now rising from repose,
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose:

[*throne.*] This is the morning of the fortieth day; for
 part of the eighteenth book, and the whole nineteenth, and
 so far of the twentieth book, contain no more time than
 the evening of the thirty ninth day.

V. 113. ——— a sudden fear

Of his arrival known, the chief alarms.]

was at a loss for an explication of this line, until I found
 it in Eustathius; for why should Ulysses imagine that Pe-
 nelope knew him to be Ulysses, after a speech that expres-
 sed so much concern for his absence? Ulysses, having on-
 ly heard the voice, not distinguished the words of her
 lamentation, mistakes the tears of Penelope for tears of
 joy; he suspects that the discovery is made by Euryclea
 or Telemachus; that they have told her truth to give her
 comfort; and fears lest in the transport of her joy she
 should act something that would betray him to the suitors,
 and prevent his designs: he therefore immediately with-
 draws, and makes a prayer to heaven for a sign to re-
 assure his hopes, that he may proceed with confidence to
 their destruction.

V. 120. *Jove, and ethereal thrones*———

123. ——— a blissful omen———]

And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove!

Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above.

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,

The pitying god his guardian aid avows.

Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds:

With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.

The construction in the Greek is ungrammatical; for after Ἐὖ πάτερ in the singular, the poet immediately adds ἐν μ' ἐβίλοντι in the plural number; τὰ λοιπὰ δαίμονες are implied, says Eustathius, so that Θεοὶ is understood which rectifies the construction.

The reader will fully understand the import of this prayer, from the nature of omens, and the notions of them among the ancients: *If*, says Ulysses, *my prayer is heard let there be a voice from within the palace to certify me of it*; and immediately a voice is heard, *O Jupiter, may this day be the last to the suitors*! Such speeches as fell accidentally from any person were held ominous, and one of the antient ways of divination: Ulysses understands it as such, and accepts the omen. It was in use among the Romans, as appears from Tully of Divination. When P. Æmilius was going to war with Perseus king of the Macedonians, he found his little daughter in tears: *O father* says she, *Perseus is dead*! meaning her little dog named Perseus; Æmilius immediately replied, *O daughter, embrace the omen*, applying it to Perseus king of the Macedonians; who was afterwards conquered by him, and died a captive in Rome. The same practice was used by the Hebrews, it was called Bath Kol. This is an instance of it: two Rabbies desiring to see Samuel a Babylonish doctor, *let us follow*, said they, *the hearing of Bath Kol*, travelling therefore near a school, they heard a boy reading these words out of Samuel xxv. 1. *And Samuel died*. They observed it, and found that their friend was dead. The Sortes Virgilianæ afterwards were much of this kind.

v. 128. Loud from a sapphire sky——] It was this

on, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r, 130
 An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.
 Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind;

Circumstance, of thunder bursting from a *serene sky*, that
 made it ominous: it was noted as such amongst the Ro-
 mans in the books of the augurs; and Horace brings it as
 proof against the opinions of Epicurus.

——— *Jupiter*

*Igni corusca nubila dividens,
 Plerumque per purum tonantes
 Egit equos, volucremque currum.*

Virgil likewise speaks of thunder as ominous, when An-
 dris saw the lambent flame round the head of Iulus: he
 says to Jupiter and immediately it thunders.

*Vix ea fatus erat senior subitoque fragore
 Intonuit.*

The Stoics drew an argument from thunder from a *serene*
 against the doctrines of Epicurus, who taught that the
 gods had no regard of human affairs; for they concluded
 from thunder to be *præter-natural*, and an argument of a
 divine providence.

v. 133. *Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind.*]
 This little particularity shews us the great profusion of
 the suitors, who employed twelve mills to find them bread.
 There is a particular energy in the word *ἐπιπίοντο*; it
 notes the great labour and assiduity of these people in
 preparing the bread, and consequently the great waste of
 the suitors. It likewise preserves a piece of antiquity, that
 the Greeks formerly had mills in their palaces to provide for
 their families, and that these mills were attended by wo-
 men; I suppose because preparing bread was an household
 work, and therefore fell to the lot of female servants.

Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pour flour (the growth and strength of man) 135
 Discharging to the day the labour due,
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew ;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind :
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd. 140

Father of gods and men ! whose thunders rowl
 O'er the Cerulean vault, and shake the pole ;
 Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare ostent,
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
 In this blest moment of accepted pray'r,
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care !
 Instant, O Jove ! confound the suitor train,
 For whom o'er-told I grind the golden grain :
 Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
 And be this festival decreed their last !

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.

Mean-time the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian-food :
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir ;
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant fabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
 His steps impetuous to the portal press'd ;
 And Euryclea thus he there address'd.

Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
 Was care for due refection, and repose,

Bestow'd the stranger guest? Or waits he griev'd,
His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers;
(In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs.)
The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus: O cease that ever-honour'd name
To blenish now; it ill deserves your blame. 170

A bowl of gen'rous wine suffic'd the guest;
In vain the queen the night-refection prest;
Nor wou'd he court repose in downy state,
Unblest'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!

A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed:

A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel javelin, pois'd, with regal port,
To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court, 180
Forth-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd:
Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,

v. 165. *Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers.*] 15
The speech of Telemachus may seem to be wanting in
dial respect, as it appears to condemn the conduct of his
mother: but (remarks Eustathius) the contrary is to be
gathered from it. His blame is really a commendation;
shews that her affection was so great for Ulysses, that
he received every vagrant honourably, who deceived her
16 with false news about him; and that other persons who
brought no tidings of him, though men of greater worth,
were less acceptable.

v. 180. *To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court,
Forth-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd.*]

Behind him sow'rly stalk'd. Without delay
 The dame divides the labour of the day ;
 Thus urging to the toil the menial train. 185
 What marks of luxury the marble stain !
 Its wonted lustre let the floor regain ;
 The seats with purple clothe in order due ;
 And let th' absterfve sponge the board renew :

It was customary for kings and magistrates to go early every morning into the public assemblies, to distribute justice, and take care of public affairs : but this assembly contributing nothing to the action of the Odyſſey, the poet paſſes it over in a curſory manner without any enlargement. Euſtathius.

v. 189. *And let th' absterfve sponge the board renew.*
 The table was not antiently covered with linen, but carefully cleaned with wet ſponges. Thus Arrian, ἄρον τὰς πραπίδας, σπόγγισον : And Martial :

Hæc tibi forte datur tergendis spongia mensis.

They made uſe of no napkins to wipe their hands, but the ſoft and fine part of the bread, which they called ἀπομαγδαλιαί, which afterwards they threw to the dogs: this cuſtom is mentioned in the Odyſſey, lib. 10.

Ὡς δ' ὅταν ἀμφὶ ἀνακτα κύνες δαίτηθεν ἰοντα
 Σαίνωσ', αἱ εἰ γὰρ τε φέρεי μελίγματα θνητοῖς.

*As from ſome feaſt a man returning late,
 His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
 Rejoicing round, ſome morſel to receive,
 Such as the good man ever wont to give.*

The morſel in the tranſlation, and the μελίγματα, the Greek, mean theſe pieces of bread, or ἀπομαγδαλιαί, with which the ancients wiped their hands after eating and then threw to the dogs.

Let some refresh the vase's sullied mold ; 190

Some bid the goblets boast their native gold :

Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,

And copious waters pure for bathing bear :

Dispatch ! for soon the suitors will assay

The lunar feast-rites to the god of day. 195

She said ; with duteous haste a bevy fair

Of twenty virgins to the spring repair :

With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.

Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.

Some wield the sounding ax ; the dodder'd oaks 200

Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.

Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,

(Eumæus in their train) the maids return.

v. 195. *The lunar feast-rites to the god of day.*] This was the last day of one month, and the first of the following : the Greek months were lunar, the first day of every month was a day of great solemnity, and it was consecrated to Apollo, the author and fountain of light. Ulysses had said, *lib.* 14. v. 186.

Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,

His antient realms Ulysses shall survey ;

In blood and each proud oppressor mourn.

Τῷ μὲν φθινόβοις, μὲνδ' ἔτι δ' ἱσαμένοιο.

This, says Solon in Plutarch, means, that Ulysses shall return on the last day of the month precisely ; and here we find it verified. Ulysses discovers himself upon this day, and kills the suitors : by his return, in the foregoing period, is meant his discovery ; for he was returned when he made that assertion to Eumæus. It is therefore probable, that the above recited verse was rightly interpreted by Solon.

Three porkers for the feast, all brawny chin'd,
 He brought; the choicest of the tusky kind : 20
 In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
 Then to the king this friendly speech renew'd :
 Now say sincere, my guest ! the suitor train
 Still treat thy worth with lordly dull disdain ;
 Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane ? 210

Some pitying god (Ulysses sad reply'd)
 With vollied vengeance blast their tow'ring pride !
 No conscious blush, no sense of right restrains
 The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins :
 From vice to vice their appetites are tost, 215
 All cheaply sated at another's cost !

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
 Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
 The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
 Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd : 220
 Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound ;
 With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs resound :
 And to the chief austere, aloud began
 The wretch unfriendly to the race of man.

Here, vagrant, still ? offensive to my lords ! 225
 Blows have more energy than airy words ;
 Those arguments I'll use ; nor conscious shame,
 Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
 On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
 A plenteous board ! Hence ! seek another host ! 230

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
 But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephalenia cross the surgy main

Philæti^{us} late arriv'd, a faithful swain.

A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace,

235

And goats he brought, the pride of all their race;

Imported in a shallop not his own:

The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan—

Strait to the guardian of the bristly kind

He thus began, benevolent of mind.

240

What guest is he, of such majestic air?

His lineage and paternal clime declare:

Dim thro' th' eclipse of fate, the rays divine

Of sovereign state with faded splendor shine.

If monarchs by the gods are plung'd in woe,

245

To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go!

Then affable he thus the chief address'd,

Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd,

Stranger! may fate a milder aspect shew,

And spin thy future with a whiter clue!

250

v. 237. *Imported in a shallop*—] To understand this passage, it is necessary to remember that Melanthius and Philæti^{us} fed their flocks and herds in Cephalenia, an adjacent island, under the dominion of Ulysses; but living in different parts of it, they are brought over in separate vessels, by different ferrymen, *παραμυς*, as Homer expresses it.

v. 245. *If monarchs by the gods*, etc.] This is the reasoning of Philæti^{us}: kings are in a peculiar manner the care of the gods; and if the gods exempt not kings from calamities, how can inferior persons (says Dacier) expect to be exempted, or complain in the day of adversity? but I persuade myself the words have a deeper sense, and mean Ulysses; 'Well may vagrants suffer, when kings, such as Ulysses, are not free from afflictions.'

O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries ;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies !
 Unpiteous of the race thy will began,
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 255
 The gauling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
 Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will :

v. 251. *O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries ;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies !*

These words are to be ascribed to the excess of sorrow which Philætiüs feels for the sufferings of Ulysses ; for they certainly transgress the bounds of reason. But if we consider the state of theology in Homer's time, the sentence will appear less offensive ; " How can Jupiter (says " Philætiüs) who is our father, throw his children into " such an abyss of misery ? Thou, oh Jove, hast made us, " yet hast no compassion when we suffer." It is no easy matter to answer this argument from the heathen theology, and no wonder therefore if it confounds the reason of Philætiüs ; but we who have certain hopes of a future state, can readily solve the difficulty : that state will be a time of retribution ; it will amply recompence the good man for all his calamities, or as Milton expresses,

Will justify the ways of God to men.

It may be observed in general that this introduction of Philætiüs and his speech, so warm in the cause of Ulysses, is inserted here with admirable judgment ; the poet intends to make use of his assistance in the destruction of the suitors ; he therefore brings him in giving Ulysses full assurance of his fidelity ; so that when that hero reveals himself to him, he does not depart from his cautious character, being before certified of his honesty.

I will only add that Philætiüs is not to be looked upon

O monarch ever dear!—O man of woe!—

Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow!

260

Like thee, poor stranger guest, deny'd his home!

Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam!

Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,

In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost!

as a common servant, but as an officer of state and dignity: and whatever has been said in these annotations concerning Eumæus may be applied to Philætius; he is here called ἑρχάμος ἀνδρῶν, a title of honour, and Ulysses promises to marry him into his own family in the sequel of the Odyssey; consequently he is a personage worthy to be an actor in epic poetry.

v. 260. *Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow.*]

The words in the original are ἰδιὸν ὡς ἐνόησα, and they are very differently explained by Dacier and Eustathius: ἰδιὸν, τῷτ' ἐστὶν ἰδρῶσα, ἡγωνίασα, “I have sweated and been in an agony at the thought of the severe dispensations of Jupiter;” this is the interpretation of Eustathius. Dacier takes ἰδιὸν to be an adjective, and then it must be connected with the preceding period.

Οὐκ ἔλειαίγεις ἀνδρας, ἐπὴν δὴ γίγνεται αὐτὸς,
Μισγόμεναι κακότητι, καὶ ἄλγεσι λευγαλίοισι,
Ἰδιὸν ὡς ἐνόησα.

Ut privatim, vel domestico admonitus sum exemplo, for so we may render ἰδιὸν, meaning Ulysses; then the sense will be this; Jupiter, though thou hast made us, thou hast no compassion upon mankind, thou castest us into evils and misery; as I have learned by a private or domestic instance, namely in the person of Ulysses. If my judgment were of any weight, I should recommend this interpretation rather than that of Eustathius, which seems to be a forced one, and I remember no instance of this nature in Homer; but the preference is submitted to the reader's decision.

O, grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, 'till sorrow sink me to the grave!
 His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd
 The regent of his Cephallenian herd:
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed! and blackens far the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that croud his court:
 Who in partition seek his realm to share;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine revere.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide:
 Now, to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy:
 Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail: 280
 In op'ning prospects of ideal joy
 My king returns; the proud usurpers die.
 To whom the chief: In thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd;
 Attend a deed already ripe in fate: 285
 Attest, oh Jove, the truth I now relate!
 This sacred truth attest each genial pow'r,
 Who bless the board, and guard this friendly bow'r?
 Before thou quite the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey, 290
 Thy wond'ring eyes shall view: his rightful reign
 By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
 And to the shades devote the suitor-train.

O Jove supreme, the raptur'd swain replies,
 With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys ! 295
 These aged nerves, with new-born vigor strung,
 In that blest cause shou'd emulate the young—
 Assents Eumæus to the pray'r address;

And equal ardors fire his loyal breast.
 Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate, 300

And deathful arts employ the dire debate :
 When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
 Truſs'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove :
 Sinister to their hope ! this omen ey'd
 Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd. 305

The gods from force and fraud the prince defend ;
 O peers ! the sanguinary scheme suspend :
 Your future thought let sable fate employ ;
 And give the present hour to genial joy.

From council strait th' assenting peerage ceas'd, 310
 And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.

v. 305. *Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd.*] It may be asked why Amphinomus gives this interpretation to the prodigy ? and why might not the eagle denote the suitors, and the pidgeon Telemachus ? no doubt but such an interpretation would have been specious, but contrary to the rules of augury. The eagle is the king of birds, and must therefore of necessity denote the chief personage, and consequently could only be applied to Ulysses, or Telemachus. Amphinomus thus interprets it; and the suitors acquiesce in his interpretation.

v. 311. *And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.*] The ancients, says Eustathius, observe that this is the only place where the suitors offer any sacrifice throughout the whole Odyssey, and that there is no instance at all,

Dis-rob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
 Then all with speed succinct the victims slay ;
 With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers-bleed,
 And the proud steer was on the marble spread. 315
 With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round,
 Wine rosy bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
 By sage Eumæus born : the purple tide
 Melanthius from an ample jar supply'd :

that they make any prayer to the gods. But is it evident from this place, that this is a sacrifice? it is true the sacrificial term of ἱερευον is mentioned ; but perhaps that word may not denote a sacrifice ; for ἱερεῖα, though it primarily signifies the flesh of animals offered to the gods, yet in a less proper acceptation implies the flesh of all animals indifferently. Thus Athenæus, τροφήν, τῶν νεογνῶν ἱερεῖον, which must be rendered, *the flesh of young animals*. Thus lib. 7, ἐννοηλοτέρη τὰ νύκτα θύμενα ἱερεῖα, *the flesh of animals that are killed by night soonest putrifies* ; and Galen uses ζῶν, and ἱερεῖον, for an animal indiscriminately. The reason is, because originally no animal was ever slain, but some part of it was offered to the gods, and in this sense every ζῶν was ἱερεῖον. If we consult the context in Homer, it must be allowed that there is no other word but ἱερευον that distinguishes this from a common repast, through the whole description ; and if that word will bear a remote signification, as ἱερεῖον does, I should conclude that this is no sacrifice. Nay, if it should be found that ἱερευον implies of necessity a religious act, yet it will not prove that this is more than a customary meal, since the ancients at all entertainments made libations to the gods : what may seem to strengthen this conjecture is, that the poet immediately adds, that the Greeks, Ἀχαιοί, sacrificed in the grove of Apollo ; without mentioning that the suitors partook in the sacrifice : nay they seem to be feasting in the place, while the Greeks are offering in the grove.

Book XX. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 83

High canisters of bread Philæti^{us} plac'd; 320

And eager all devour the rich repast.

Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat !

A trivet-table, and ignobler feat,

The prince appoints ; but to his fire assigns

The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines. 325

Partake, my guest, he cry'd without controul

The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl :

Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage ;

No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age ;

This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be, 330

From my great fire too soon devolv'd to me !

Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease,

Lest arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave and young,

Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue. 335

Be patient, peers ! at length Antinous cries ;

The threats of vain imperious youth despise :

Would Jove permit the meditated blow,

That stream of eloquence should cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd : 340

Mean-while the pomp of festival increas'd :

By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move

The city-tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove :

v. 323. *A trivet-table and ignobler feat.*] This circumstance is not inserted unnecessarily ; the table is suitable to the disguise of Ulysses, and it might have created a jealousy in the suitors if Telemachus had used him with greater distinction.

Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid ;
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
 But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side board set) Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger guest ;
 Whom Pallas with unpar'd'ning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest ;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen,
 Unnumber'd acres arable and green ;
 (Ctesippus nam'd) this lord Ulysses ey'd,
 And thus burst out, imposthumate with pride.

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend :
 Since due regard must wait the prince's friend,
 Let each a token of esteem bestow :
 This gift acquits the dear respect I owe ;
 With which he nobly may discharge his feat,
 And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said ; and of the steer before him plac'd,
 That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
 Where to the pattern-bone by nerves combin'd,
 The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd
 Which whizzing high the wall unseemly sign'd.
 The chief, indignant, grins a ghastly smile ;
 Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :

v. 370. — *Grins a ghastly smile.*] The expression
 in Greek is remarkable :

When thus the prince with pious rage inflam'd :
Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd

——— μείδῃσι δὲ θυμῷ

Σαρδάνιον (or Σαρδόνιον)

Some tell us that there is an herb frequent in the island of Sardinia, which by tasting distorts the muscles, that a man seems to laugh while he is under a painful agony : and from hence the Sardinian laugh became a proverb, to signify a laugh which concealed an inward pain. Others refer the expression to an antient custom of the Sardinians (a colony of the Lacedæmonians) ; it is pretended that upon a certain festival every year, they not only slew all their prisoners of war, but also all the old men that were above seventy, and obliged these miserable wretches to laugh while they underwent the severity of torment. Either of these reasons fully explains the meaning of the Σαρδόνιος γέλως ; and shews it to denote an exterior laugh, and an inward pain. I am inclined to prefer the former interpretation, not only as it appears most natural, but because Virgil seems to understand it in that sense, for he alludes to the above mentioned quality of the Sardinian herbs, Eclogue 7. v. 41.

Immo ego Sardois videor tibi amarior herbis.

———deform'd like him who chaws

Sardinian herbage to contract his jaws.

The reader may observe that Ctesippus breaks out into buffoonry, and the suitors are frequently guilty of it in other parts of the Odyssey : these levities have been proscribed by the critics as too low, and unworthy of epic poetry : but Homer adapts himself to his characters, he paints ridiculous men in ridiculous colours ; though I will not say but such characters are more proper for comedy than epic poetry. If ever they are pardonable, they are in Homer, who puts these low pleasantries into the mouths of drunkards and debauchees ; such persons being generally men of no worth or serious deportment.

Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear :
 Nor shou'd thy fire a queen his daughter boast,
 The suitor now had vanish'd in a ghost :
 No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless pow'r
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
 For genuine worth, of age mature to know,
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,
 With rapes and riot to prophane my court ;
 What single arm with numbers can contend ?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend,
 And with my life such vile dishonours end.

A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd.

A just reproof, ye peers ! your rage restrain
 From the protected guest, and menial train :
 And prince ! to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
 Whilst hope prevail'd to see your fire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord :
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate,
 To think he still survives to claim the state ?
 Now press the sovereign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire :
 The lord, selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long-contended prize :
 Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty blest,
 You reign, of this imperial dome possesst.

Sage and serene Telemachus replies ;
 By him at whose behest the thunder flies !
 And by the name on earth I most revere, 405
 By great Ulysses, and his woes I swear !
 Who never must review his dear domain ;
 Enroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train,
 Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
 My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse : 410
 But from this dome my parent-queen to chase !——
 From me, ye gods ! avert such dire disgrace.
 But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
 The suitors souls, insensate of their doom !
 A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd the fated croud ; 415
 The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud .

v. 403. *Sage and serene Telemachus replies, etc.*] It is observable that Telemachus swears by the *sorrows* of his father ; an expression in my judgment, very noble, and at the same time full of filial tenderness. This was an antient custom among the Orientals, as appears from an oath not unlike it in Genesis xxxi. 53. *And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac.*

But how is this speech to be understood ? for how can Telemachus persuade his mother to marry, when he knows that Ulysses is returned ? There is a concealed and an apparent meaning in the expression. Telemachus, observes Eustathius, swears that he will not hinder his mother from taking an husband, but he means Ulysses : the words therefore are ambiguous, and the ambiguity deceives the suitors, who believe that by this oath Telemachus obliges himself not only not to hinder, but promote the intended nuptials.

415. *A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd, etc.*] It is in the Greek, *They laughed with other mens cheeks.* There are

Floating in gore, portentous to survey!

In each discolour'd vase the viands lay :

many explications of this passage : Eustathius imagines it to denote a feigned and pretended laughter. Erasmus explains it *non libentur neque ex animo ridere, sed ita ridere quasi non tuis, sed alienis maxillis rideas*. But if we consult the conduct of the suitors, a contrary interpretation will seem to be necessary : for this laughter of the suitors appears to be very real, and from the heart. Homer calls it ἀσβεστον, *excessive, inextinguished*; and again, ἡδὺ γέλασσαν, or they laughed *with joy, suaviter riserunt*; which expressions denote a real and unfeigned laughter. But how will the words be brought to bear this construction? Very naturally : They laughed as if they had borrowed their cheeks, as if their cheeks were not their own, and consequently they were not afraid to use them with licence and excess; (such persons as the suitors having no regard for any thing that belongs to another.)

Horace makes use of the same expression,

Cum rapies in jus, malis ridentem alienis.

And likewise Valerius :

• *Errantesque genæ, atque alieno gaudia vultu.*

This is the opinion of Dacier; but there are some lines in the Greek that make it doubtful ! for immediately after the expression of laughing with other mens cheeks, Homer adds, that their eyes *flowed with tears*, and *sorrow seized their souls*. It is true, Homer describes the suitors under an alienation of mind, and a sudden distraction occasioned by Minerva; and from hence we may gather the reason why they are tost by so sudden a transition to contrary passions, from laughter to tears; this moment they laugh extravagantly, and the next they weep with equal excess : persons in such a condition being liable to such vicissitudes.

Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
And sudden sighs precede approaching woe. 420

v 417. *Floating in gore, protentous to survey!
In each discolour'd vase the viands lay!]*

This is to be looked upon as a prodigy, the belief of which was established in the old world, and consequently, whether true or false may be allowed to have a place in poetry. See Book XII. Annot. 32.

In the following speech of Theoclymenus there is a beautiful enthusiasm of poetry; but how are we to understand that Theoclymenus sees these wonders, when they are invisible to all the suitors? Theoclymenus was a prophet, and speaks of things future as present; it is the eye of the prophet that sees these events, and the language of prophecy that speaks of them as present. Thus when he says he sees the palace red with blood, and thronged with ghosts; he anticipates the event, which is verified in the approaching death of the suitors.

Eustathius is of opinion, that by the last words of this speech Theoclymenus intends to express an eclipse of the sun; this being the day of the new moon, when eclipses happen. Others understand by it the death of the suitors, as when we say the sun is for ever gone down upon the dead: Theocritus uses that expression, *σύνσκοιτι πάντα ἔδουκ' ἥλιον*. Homer means by it, that the suitors shall never more behold the light of the sun.

————— ἥλιος δ' ἔ
'Ουρανὸν ἔξαπολώλει —————

So far Eustathius. It may be added that the Roman poets used the same expression in this latter signification. Thus Catullus,

*Nobis, quum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*

Either of these expositions make the passage intelligible.

In vision rap'd, the * Hypereſian ſeer
Up-roſe, and thus divin'd the vengeance near.

O race to death devote ! with Stygian ſhade
Each deſtin'd peer impending fates invade :
With tears your wan diſtorted cheeks are drown'd ; 425
With ſanguine drops the walls are rubied round :
Thick ſwarms the ſpacious hall with howling ghoſts,
To people Orcus, and the burning coaſts !
Nor gives the ſun his golden orb to roll,
But univerſal night uſurps the pole ! 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The peers reproach the ſure divine of fate ;
And thus Eurymachus: The dotard's mind
To ev'ry ſenſe is loſt, to reaſon blind :
Swift from the dome conduct the ſlave away ; 435
Let him in open air behold the day.

v. 436. *Let him in open air behold the day.* } The ſuitors taking the prediction of Theoclymenus literally, viz. *I ſee you all involv'd in darkneſs*, think him diſtracted, not conceiving his words to be a prophecy ; and therefore by way of deriſion command him to be carried into a place of public reſort, that he may convince himſelf it is full day. Eufſtathius imagines, they intended to reproach him with drunkenneſs, becauſe it makes all objects appear indifſinct and different from the reality : he quotes a pleaſant expreſſion of Anachariſis to this purpoſe : a certain perſon telling him at an entertainment that he had married a very ugly woman ; “ I think ſo too,” (replies Anachariſis) but fill me a bumper, that I may make her a beauty.”

* Theoclymenus.

Tax not (the heav'n-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
 Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind ;
 No clouds of error dim th' ethereal rays,
 Her equal pow'r each faithful sense obeys. 440
 Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
 Far hence, before yon' hov'ring deaths descend ;
 Lest the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
 I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer; 445
 His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.
 O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
 And aim to wound the prince with pointlefs wit :
 Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
 Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice ; 450
 Why such profusion of indulgence shown
 To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detesting drone ?
 That other feeds on planetary schemes,
 And pays his host with hideous noon day dreams.
 But, prince ! for once at least believe a friend, 455
 To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,

v. 437. *Tax not (the heav'n illumin'd seer rejoin'd)*
 etc.] Eustathius explains the answer of Theoclymenus
 to be both pleasant and serious : " I have *eyes*, and there-
 fore have no occasion for a guide to lead me from the
 " palace ; I have *ears*, and therefore hear that my ab-
 " sence is desired ; I have both my *feet*, and therefore
 " am able to go away without giving others the trouble
 " to assist me ; and I have an *understanding* well inform-
 " ed, by which I see the evil that threatens the suitors,
 " and haste away to avoid it."

v. 456. *To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send.]*

Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
Dear sell the slaves ! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they ; but nought the prince replies ;
Full on his fire he row'd his ardent eyes : 460

It is evident from this passage that the name of Sicily is very antient, and Eustathius makes the following remark upon it: that the reason why the poet never mentions this word in describing the wanderings of Ulysses which happened chiefly near Sicily, is to make his poetry more surprizing and marvellous ; and that the more to countenance those fabulous relations and miracles which he has told the Phæaciens, he chuses to speak of it by names less known, and less familiar to his readers. Dacier observes from Bochart, that this island received the name of Sicily from the Phœnicians, before the birth of Homer, or the war of Troy : Siculi in their language signifies *perfection* ; they called it the *isle of perfection*, because it held the chief rank amongst all the islands in the Mediterranean : " It is the largest and best island in all our seas," says Strabo. It has likewise been thought to have taken its name from the Syrian language, namely from Segol, or Segul, a raisin. For long before the vine was known in Africa, Sicily was famous for its vineyards, and from thence the Carthaginians imported their raisins and vines. Homer celebrates this island for its vines in the 9th Odyssey.

Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour,
And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.

It is likewise probable from this passage, that the Sicilians traded in slaves ; for their lands were fertile, and they merchandized for them to manure the ground. I should rather think that they were remarkable for their barbarity to their slaves ; the suitors speaking by way of terror to intimidate Theoclymenus ; and the expression seems to bear the same import with that concerning Echetus, we will " send him to Echetus, or the Sicilians, who will " use him with the utmost cruelty."

Impatient strait to flesh his virgin sword,
From the wife chief he waits the deathful word.

Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen

To see the circle sat, of all unseen.

Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare

465

An eve repast, with equal cost and care :

But vengeful Pallas with preventing speed

A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;

A feast of death ! the feaster's doom'd to bleed !

}

v. 463. *Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen.*]

The word in the original is *διφρεος*, and signifies a large seat that would hold two persons, from *δις φέρειν*.

This circumstance (observes Eustathius) is not inserted in vain : the poet describes Penelope thus seated, that she might see and hear the actions and designs of the suitors, in order to form her conduct according to the occasion : now for instance, she perceives their insolence risen to such an height, that she dares make no further delay, but immediately proclaims herself the prize of the best archer : and this naturally connects the story with the next book.

THE
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Phe.

The bending of Ulysses's bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who should first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses, taking Eumæus and Philætius apart, discovers himself to them: then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires:
Who now can bend Ulysses bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow thro' the distant ring,

This book is entitled *Τὸ ξυ γέναι*, or the *proposition of the bow*: this action of Penelope has given occasion of gallery both to modern and antient critics; they insinuate that she proposed this exercise of the bow to try the strength of her gallants, determining to have regard to that single qualification in the choice of her husband.

*Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu,
Qui latus argueret, corneus arcus erat.*

Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame;
But discord and black death await the game!

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin train attends;

They interpret *νεῖον ἐπιδύνασαι* into a sense very contrary to the character of Penelope. It is true, other authors have directly charged her with unchastity, and affirm that she had a son named Pan, because *all* the suitors had a share in him. Lycophron calls her,

Βασίλειαν σιμνῶς κασπαρεύσαν.

It is the exercise of the bow that has occasioned these imputations; for none of Homer's commentators have given the reason why she proposes that exercise in particular; and therefore seeing no reason for it, they have invented a false one, and give the story a ridiculous air: I flatter myself that a better solution may be found out, and a reason given why Penelope proposes this exercise in particular, and preferable to any other.

We are to remember that this day was sacred to Apollo; this is evident from the preceding book, where the Ithacans offer an hecatomb in a grove consecrated to that deity; the diversion suits the day, the exercise of the bow being proper to be practised on the festival of that deity who is the patron of it. Several of the titles of Apollo are derived from it; *Ἐκάμειγος*, *Ἐκατηβόλος*, *Ἀργυρότοξος*. It is strange that this necessary observation should escape the notice of all commentators.

If any thing further were wanting to reconcile us to the conduct of Penelope in proposing the bow, an instance almost parallel to it might be produced from history. When Cambyfes was preparing to make war against Æthiopia, the king of that country bent his great bow with two fingers in the presence of the Persian ambassadors, and unbending it again, delivered it to them with these words: that when the Persians could do the like, they might hope

A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd:
Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay ;

10

to conquer the Æthiopians. There is nothing more absurd in the delivery of the bow to the suitors by Penelope, than in the same act of the Æthiopian king to the Persian ambassadors.

v. 9. *A brazen key she held, etc.*] The numerous particularities and digressive histories crouded together in the beginning of this book have not escaped censure. The poet very circumstantially describes the key, and the make of it, as likewise the bow and quiver, then tells us who gave it to Ulysses ; at the mention of the donor's name he starts into a little history of him, and returns not in many lines to his subject ; he then no less circumstantially describes the chamber, and the frame of the door, he descends to every particular of Penelope's opening it, and every step and motion she takes till she produces the bow before the suitors. This conduct has been liable to objection, as made up of particulars of small importance, to no proposed end. But notwithstanding, every circumstance is not without its effect and beauty, and nothing better shews the power of the poet's diction. So great a critic as Vida admired this very passage. *Poetic. lib. 2.*

*Ipsa procos etiam ut jussit certare sagittis /
Penelope, optatas promittens callida tadas
Victori, per quanta moræ dispendia mentes
Suspensas trahit, ante viri quam proferet arcum !*

The poet adapts his verse to the nature of his subject ; the description loiters, to express the studied delay of Penelope, and her unwillingness to bring affairs to a decision. However I will not promise that these digressions and ancient histories will please every reader ; the passage is so far from being faulty, that it is really an instance of Ho-

There shone high heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
 And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
 And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept
 Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
 To young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd :
 Beneath Ortilochus his roof they meet ;
 One loss was private, one a public debt :
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains :

mer's judgment ; yet every thing that is not a fault, is not a beauty. The case is, Penelope proposes the trial of the bow, merely to protract time from the nuptials ; she is slow in producing it for the same reason ; and Homer, to paint this slowness in a lively manner, lets the subject of the poem stand still, and wanders out of the way, that he may not come too soon to the end of his journey.

v. 21. *Messena's state, etc.*] Is has been disputed whether Messene here was a city or a country ; Strabo affirms it to be a country, *lib. 8*. It was a port of Laconia under the dominion of Menelaus in the time of the war of Troy ; and then (continues that author) the city named Messene was not built. Pausanias is of the same opinion, *lib. 4. chap. 1*. ' Before the battle of Leuctra between the Thebans and Lacedæmonians, it is my judgment that there was no city called Messene ; this is evident from the words of Homer.'

Τῷ δ' ἐν Μεσσηνί ζυμβλήτην ἀλλήλοισιν
 Ὀϊκῶν ἐν Ὀρτιλόχοιο.

Now Ortilochus lived in Pheræ, a city of Messenia, and consequently Ulysses and Iphitus meeting at his palace in Messenia, Homer must mean the country, not the city. That Ortilochus lived in Pheræ, appears from the third Odyssey.

And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
The king and elders trust their common cause.
But Iphitus, employ'd on other cares, 25
Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,
And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;
Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!

Ἐς Φηγᾶς δ' ἵκοντο Διοκλῆος ποτὶ δῶμον,
Ἵκιστος Ὀγτιλὸχαϊο.

This Iphitus was the son of Eurytus mentioned in the eighth book, famous for his skill in archery.

*Vain Eurytus! whose art became his crime,
Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime,
Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,
Who boldly durst defy the bowyer God.*

So that even this digression is not foreign to the purpose: the poet largely describes the bow, being to make great use of it in the sequel of the *Odyssey*: he shews it was originally in the possession of Eurytus, the most famous archer in the world: nay, this very digression may appear to be absolutely necessary; it being requisite to describe that bow, as of no common excellence and strength, which was not to be drawn by any of the suitors; and at the same time it sets off the strength of the hero of the poem, who alone is able to bend it.

v. 22. *Three hundred sheep, etc.*] It has been observed in a former annotation, that such ravages or pyracies were not only lawful but honourable amongst the ancients: why then is Ulysses here sent to redemand the spoils made by the Messenians? Dacier answers, that such inroads were not allowable except in open war; the means between Greeks and Greeks; for they themselves exercised such pyracies with impunity against other nations.

For journeying on to Hercules at length,
 The lawless wretch, the man of brutal strength,
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest.

v. 31. *Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress.*] Homer very solemnly condemns this action of Hercules in slaying Iphitus; and some authors (remarks Eustathius) defend him by saying, he was seized with madness, and threw Iphitus down from the top of his palace; but this is contrary to Homer, and to the sentiment of those who write that Hercules was delivered as a slave to Omphale, for the expiation of the murder of Iphitus.

But what chiefly wants explication is the expression

——— ἐδὲ τραπέζαν
 ἥδιστον. ———

That is, *he paid no reverence to his table.* The table was held sacred by the ancients, by means of which, honour was paid to the god of friendship and hospitality: it was therefore a crime to dishonour it by any indecent behaviour. To this purpose Juvenal:

Hic verbis nullus pudor, aut reverentia mensæ.

The statues of the gods were raised upon the tables, they were consecrated by placing on them sa't, which was always esteemed holy, and by offering libations to the gods from them: the table therefore is called in Plutarch *φιλῶν Θεῶν βωμὸν, καὶ ξενίων*, the altar of the gods of friendship and hospitality: and therefore to have eaten at the same table, was esteemed an inviolable obligation of friendship: and *τραπέζαν παραβαίνειν*, to transgress against the table, a breach of the laws of hospitality, and the blackest of crimes. I will only add, that it was customary, upon making an alliance of hospitality, to give mutual tokens; thus Ulysses here presents Iphitus with a sword and spear;

He gave the bow ; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart :
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore
 Their first, last pledges ! for they met no more.

35

The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land,
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend.

40

Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went ;
 Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)

The folding gates a dazzling light display'd,
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlay'd.

45

The bolt, obedient to the filken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring ;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round ;
 The bars fall back ; the flying valves resound ;

50

Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.

Iphitus Ulysses with a bow. And the producing these tokens was a recognition of the covenant of hospitality, between the persons themselves, and their descendents in following generations.

v. 51. *Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring.* This description presents us with a noble image; Homer introduces it to shew the largeness and strength of the door, which resounds as it opens. This exalts a trifling circumstance into sublimity and dignity, and renders a common action poetical; not unlike that in the 24th of the Iliad.

She moves majestic thro' the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume ;
 There from the column where aloft it hung,
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung :
 Across her knees she laid the well known bow,
 And pensive fate, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns,
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns,
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.

Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate bras and silver rings,
 Full in the portal the chaste queen appears,
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears :
 On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
 While thus the matron, with majestic air.

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
 For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ;

*Wide as appears some palace-gate display'd,
 So broad his pinions stretch'd their ample shade.*

v. 57. *Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
 And pensive fate, and tears began to flow.*

The bow recalls to her mind the thought of her husband,
 and this raises her sorrows. The least trifle that once be-
 longed to a beloved person, is sufficient to cast a cloud o-
 ver the soul, which naturally falls in a shower of tears : and
 no doubt the exercise which the suitors are to practise with
 the bow, upon which her future fate depends, aggravates
 her sorrows ; she weeps not only for the loss of Ulysses,
 but at the thought that she is ready to enter upon second
 nuptials, contrary to her inclinations.

If these neglected, faded charms can move?

Or is it but a vain pretence, you love?

If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,

Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.

Who first Ulysses' wond'rous bow shall bend, 75

And thro' twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,

Him will I follow, and forsake my home,

For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,

Long, long the scene of all my past delight,

And still to last, the vision of my night ! 80

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show

The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.

From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,

Touch'd at the dear memoirs of his king.

Philætiæ too relents, but secret shed 85

The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said.

Hence to your fields, ye rustics ! hence away,

Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day ;

Nor to the royal heart recall in vain

The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90

Enough her precious tears already flow——

Or share the feast with due respect, or go

To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow :

No vulgar task ! Ill suits this courtly crew

That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95

I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er

While yet a child) what majesty he bore !

And still (all infant as I was) retain

The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man !

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise,
 And his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft thro' every ring,
 Wretch I is not thine : the arrows of the king
 Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing !

Then thus Telemachus. Some god I find
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind ;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart ?

v. 105. *Then thus Telemachus. Some god I find,*
 etc.] This speech is not without greater obscurity than
 is usual in so clear a writer as Homer. M. Dacier has
 done it justice, and clearly opened the sense of it in her
 paraphrase. "Surely, says Telemachus, Jupiter has dis-
 "order'd my understanding : I see my mother, wife as
 "she is, preparing to leave the palace, and enter upon
 "a second marriage ; and yet in these melancholy cir-
 "cumstances, I think of nothing but diverting myself, and
 "being an idle spectator of this exercise of the bow : no,
 "no, this is not to be suffered : you (the suitors) use your
 "utmost efforts to rob me of Penelope, I will therefore
 "use mine to retain her ; a woman the most excellent in
 "any nation. But why do I praise her ? you know her
 "worth ; use therefore no pretext to defer the trial of
 "the bow, that we may come to an issue ; I will try the
 "bow with you ; and if I succeed, then I will retain her
 "as the prize of the conquest ; then she shall not be ob-
 "liged to second nuptials : nor will Penelope abandon
 "a son, who, emulating his father, is (like him) able
 "to bear the prize from so many antagonists."

This is the true meaning of the words of Telemachus ;
 the diction indeed is somewhat embarrassed, and the con-
 nections a little obscure ; but this is done by the poet, to

Come then, ye suitors ! and dispute a prize

Richer than all th' Achaian state supplies,

110

Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,

Than all our isles or continents enclose :

A woman matchless, and almost divine,

Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.

No more excuses then, no more delay ;

115

Haste to the trial——Lo ! I lead the way.

I too may try, and if this arm can wing

The feather'd arrow thro' the destin'd ring,

Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,

I shall not sorrow for a mother lost ;

120

But blest in her, possess these arms alone,

Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

He spoke ; then rising, his broad sword unbound,

And cast his purple garment on the ground.

A trench he open'd ; in a line he plac'd

125

The level axes, and the points made fast.

(His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,

The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)

Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand ;

And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand.

130

Three times, with beating heart, he made essay ;

Three times, unequal to the task, gave way ;

express the disorder and hurry of mind in Telemachus, who fears for the fate of Penelope: therefore the connection of the periods is interrupted, to represent Telemachus starting thro' eagerness of spirit from thought to thought, without order or regularity.

A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd,
 And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd.
 The fourth had drawn it. The great fire with joy 135
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.
 His ardour strait th' obedient prince suppress,
 And artful, thus the suitor-train address.

v. 135. *The fourth had drawn it. The great fire
 with joy*

Beheld, but with a sign forbade——]

It is not apparent at the first view why Ulysses prohibits Telemachus from drawing the bow; but Eustathius gives sufficient reason for this conduct: it would have defeated his whole design, and rendered the death of the suitors impracticable; for Telemachus had declared that he would retain Penelope, if he succeeded in the exercise of the bow; and this of necessity would create an immediate contest between that hero and the suitors, and bring matters unseasonably to extremity. The same author assigns a second reason; Ulysses fears lest Telemachus by bending the bow should make it more supple and flexible, and therefore commands him to desist, lest it should be drawn by the suitors; besides if he had drawn it, it would have raised an emulation amongst them, and they would have applied the utmost of their abilities not to be outdone by so young a person as Telemachus; but his despair to effect it, makes them less solicitous, the trial being equally unsuccessful to them all.

It may also be observed that there is a very happy address made to Telemachus by Homer; he shews us that he could have drawn it, but desists in obedience to Ulysses: thus the poet has found out a way to give Telemachus the honour of the victory without obtaining it; and at the same time shews the superior wisdom of Ulysses, who restrains his son in the heat of his attempt; and makes him by a happy presence of mind at once foresee the danger, and prevent it.

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature !
 For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure) 140

How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
 Retort an insult, or repel a foe ?

But you ! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
 Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
 Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.

Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son
 The bold Antinous to the rest begun.

From where the goblet first begins to flow,
 From right to left in order take the bow ; 150

v. 149. *From where the goblet first begins to flow
 From right to left, etc.]*

Antinous makes this proposition, that every person may try his skill without confusion. Perhaps it is proposed by Antinous by way of omen, the right hand being reckoned fortunate : but however that be, it is very evident that in the entertainments of the ancients the cup was delivered towards the right hand : hence δεξιωνις came to signify to drink towards the right hand, and Athenæus thus interprets this passage in the first of the Iliad.

— χρυσείοις δεκάσι
 Διιδίχατ' ἀλλήλας —

Which, remarks that author, signifies ἐδεξιῶντο προπίνοντες ἑαυτοῖς ταῖς δεξιαῖς. And there is express mention made of this practice, lib. 1. ver. 597. of the Iliad.

— τοῖς ἐνδεξία πᾶσιν
 Ὀϊνοχοσί — —

That is, *beginning from the right hand*, as the scholiast rightly interprets it, *Vulcan delivered the bowl to all the gods.*

“ And prove your several strengths ”-- The princes heard,
 And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd;
 The eldest born of Oenop's noble race,
 Who next the goblet held his holy place:
 He, only he of all the suitor-throng,
 Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.
 With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,
 The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!

This observation explains various passages in many antient authors, as well as in the Iliad and Odyssey: the custom indeed is not of any great importance, but it is at least a curiosity, and valuable because antient. I doubt not but the bowl, out of which these persons drank, would by antiquaries be thought inestimable; and the possession of an antient bowl is not quite so valuable as the knowledge of an antient custom.

v. 152. — [*Leiodes, blameless priest.*] The word in the original is *θυσιαστής*, a person who makes predictions from victims or from the smoke of the sacrifice. This Leiodes, the poet tells us, sat next to the bowl; the reason of it, saith Eustathius, was because the suitors feared lest poison should be mixed in it, and they thought themselves safe through his care and inspection: but it may perhaps be a better reason to say, that he sat there in discharge of his office as a prophet, to make libations to the gods; as was customary at the beginning and end of all entertainments.

The poet adds that this prophet was placed at the extremity of the apartment; the reason may be because he was an enemy to the insolence of the suitors, and therefore withdrew from their conversation; or perhaps the word is inserted only to shew that his place was the first (for Eustathius explains *μυχοιτάτος* by *πρώτος* and *ἐνδοτάτος*) and therefore he was the most proper person to begin the experiment, that the rest might make trial ac-

Already in despair he gives it o'er ;

Take it who will, he cries, I strive no more. 160

What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow !

What souls and spirits shall it send below !

According as they were seated, successively ; and what makes this the more probable is that the propination always began from the most honourable person

ver. 161. *What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow ?*

[What souls, and spirits, etc.]

There is in these words a full and clear prediction of the destruction of the suitors by the bow of Ulysses ; but what follows, when the prophet comes to explain himself, renders it ambiguous, *Better indeed to die, etc.* The next line is very remarkable for the distinction it makes between *ψυχας* and *ψυχας*, *soul* and *spirit* : the reader may turn to the note on *lib. 23. ver. 92, 122.* of the *Iliad* ; and to the note on *lib. 11. ver. 743.* of the *Odyssey*, where an account is given of the notion of the ancients concerning this division. I shall only here add a passage in St. Paul to the Hebrews, which did not then occur to me, that remarkably falls in with it. *The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.* Heb.

12.

This Leiodes falls by the sword of Ulysses in the next book ; but is it not injustice to take away the life of a person who is here described as a man of virtue, detesting the actions of the suitors, and dignified with prophecy ? This is easy to answer this objection ; he is one of the suitors to Penelope, as appears from his trying the bow amongst the rest of them, in order to obtain her in marriage, and consequently he is involved in the general crime : this distinguishes his case from that of Medon and Pheacas, whom Ulysses spares, it appearing that they made pretensions to the bed of Penelope, whereas Leiodes deavours to marry the queen, which single act would

Better indeed to die, and fairly give
 Nature her debt, than disappointed live,
 With each new sun to some new hope a prey,
 Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.
 How long in vain Penelope we fought ?
 This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,
 And send us with some humbler wife to live,
 Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give.

Thus speaking on the floor the bow he plac'd,
 (With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)
 At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
 And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said,
 What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled ?
 Thy coward function ever is in fear ;
 Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.

Why should this bow be fatal to the brave ?
 Because the priest is born a peaceful slave,
 Mark then what others can — he ended there,
 And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare ;

He gives it instant flame : then fast beside
 Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.

With melted lead they soak the weapon o'er,
 Chase ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.

exclude Ulysses from his own bed and dominions. But
 fides, if we would escape the punishment of wicked men
 we must not only detect their crimes, but conversation
 [Chase ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.] The
 passage has been egregiously misunderstood, and it has
 been imagined that this unguent is to anoint the limbs

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain;
 The bow inflexible resists their pain,
 The force of great Eurymachus alone
 And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown:
 Those only now remain'd; but those confess
 Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
 The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

The suitors to make them more supple, after the manner
 of the wrestlers who observed that custom; but it is ve-
 ry evident that τόξον is to be understood in the Greek,
 and that it is the bow, not the limbs of the suitors, that
 is to be anointed. Eustathius thus fully explains it; the
 ard is brought to make the bow pliant, they chafe it be-
 fore the fire, that the particles of it may enter the pores
 of the bow and render it flexible. But Eustathius falls
 into an error about the feat that is brought by Melanthi-
 us: he imagines the suitors sat while they drew the
 bow, that they might be upon a level with the ringlets
 which were fixed upon the ground; whereas in reality
 the feat is brought, that they may sit while they chafe
 the bow. Homer himself says, when Leiodes endeavours
 to draw it, that he stood up, ἀνίστατο, and again,

He stood, and stepping forward try'd the bow.

Στῇ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἕδον ἰὼν, καὶ τόξον πειρήτιζεν.

But how is this to be reconciled with the conduct of Ulysses,
 who is directly affirmed to sit while he draws it?

— ἐλκεν νευρὴν γλυφίδας

Αὐτὸθεν ἐκ διφροιο καθήμενος —

That circumstance is inserted to shew the great strength
 and dexterity of Ulysses, who is able to draw it in that
 disadvantageous posture: the poet in every incident main-
 tains his superiority.

The king observes them : he the hall forfakes, 199

And, past the limits of the court o'ertakes.

Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke :

Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock !

Shall I the secret of my breast conceal.

Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell ? 200

v. 193. *Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,*

The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.]

It is wonderful how exactly the poet observes the distribution of time ; he distinctly marks the action of every day, and allots a proper space to every action. In this place the poem goes forward while Ulysses withdraws to engage the assistance of Philætiüs and Eumæus. The suitors are amused and employed about the bow, while Ulysses steals away from their observation, and returns without raising their jealousy. The poet likewise manages the time of the discovery of Ulysses very judiciously ; though he knew the fidelity of Eumæus and Philætiüs, yet he trusts them not with the knowledge of his person, till the very hour of execution ; agreeable to the general character of his cautious nature and profound secrecy. But then is not this an imputation to Penelope, that he should chuse to discover himself to these two persons, rather than to his queen ? The answer is, there was a necessity for his discovery to the former, but none to the latter ; he wants their assistance in the future engagement, and makes good use of it ; whereas a discovery made to the queen could have been of no advantage, and might possibly have proved detrimental ; besides, this is a season that requires expedition ; and we find Ulysses complies with it ; and is very concise in the discovery and interview with Philætiüs and Eumæus. The poet therefore reserves the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope to a time of more leisure, that he may dwell upon it more largely, and beautify his poem with so essential an ornament with greater solemnity.

Say, should some fav'ring god restore again
The lost Ulysses to his native reign;
How beat your hearts? what aid would you afford?

To the proud suitors, or your antient lord?

Philæti^{us} thus. Oh were thy word not vain! 205

Would mighty Jove restore that man again!

These aged sinews with new vigour strung

In his blest cause should emulate the young:

With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd

Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began.

Those vows the gods accord: behold the man!

Your own Ulysses! twice ten years detain'd

By woes and wand'rings from this hapless land:

At length he comes; but comes despis'd, unknown, 215

And finding faithful, you, and you alone.

All else have cast him from their very thought,

Ev'n in their wishes, and their pray'rs, forgot!

Hear then, my friends! if Jove this arm succeed,

And give yon' impious revellers to bleed, 220

My care shall be, to bless your future lives

With large possessions, and with faithful wives;

Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,

And each on young Telemachus attend,

And each be call'd his brother, and my friend. 225

To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye:

Lo! the broad scar indented on my thigh,

When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,

On Parnass' top I chac'd the tusky boar.

His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd

230

The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:

v. 231. ——— *and the scar expos'd.*] Aristotle treating of the different sort of Remembrances, chap. 17. of his Poetics, divides them into two kinds, *natural* or *adventitious*; the former sort is simple and without art, which poets use for want of invention; as for instance, when they bring about the discovery of a person by some natural mark or token upon the body: the latter are either marks upon the body, or scars occasioned by some accident, or tokens distinct from the body, such as the cast-net, *etc.* which Plautus and Terence use in the discovery of several persons in their comedies: of this latter kind is this scar of Ulysses; it is an adventitious remembrance, and these remembrances (continues Aristotle) may be used with more or less art: thus in the case of this wound of Ulysses, it is used by Homer in a different way: Euryclæa, lib. 19. descries it accidentally; Ulysses here shews it to Eumæus and Philætiæus voluntarily; and it is certain that all those marks, which a poet designedly and deliberately uses to establish any verity, have less ingenuity than those which produce their effects undesignedly and casually, and consequently the remembrance in the nineteenth *Odyssey* is more ingenious than the second discovery. The reason is, it shews no ingenuity to have recourse to such marks, when we have an intention to make the discovery: it causes no surprise nor variety, neither is it produced by any art or invention: on the contrary, the other in the nineteenth book arises from the subject, and not from the fancy of the poet only. But, says Dacier, when Aristotle affirms that this present remembrance wants ingenuity, we are not yet to imagine that he condemns it; for it is a remembrance made by necessity. Ulysses has not opportunity to wait till the discovery is made accidentally, as in the nineteenth book; he is absolutely compelled to make it designedly, to engage Eumæus and Philætiæus in his cause, by plainly proving to

Eager they view'd ; with joy they stood amaz'd ;
 With tear-full eyes o'er all their master gaz'd :
 Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
 His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd : 235
 Tears follow'd tears ; no word was in their pow'r
 In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.
 The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
 And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun ; 240
 But first the wise-man ceas'd, and thus began.
 Enough——on other cares your thought imploy,
 For danger waits on all untimely joy.
 Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near :
 Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245
 Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay
 Some moments you, and let me lead the way.
 To me, neglected as I am, I know
 The haughty suitors will deny the bow ;

them that he was the real Ulysses. If therefore that hero shews less art in the manner of the remembrance, he shews more wisdom in accommodating his conduct to the opportunity, and using the present conjuncture advantageously, to bring about his own re-establishment. I will only further observe the judgment of Homer in making this discovery with the utmost brevity, concluding it in the compass of two verses: he had before enlarged upon the wound, and the reader is already fully instructed in the story: there is likewise another reason that requires conciseness; the urgency of the time demands it, for Ulysses and Eumæus could not be long in conference without observation, and raising the jealousy of the suitors.

But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis born away, 250
 Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
 At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :
 Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;
 Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear. 255
 To thy strict charge, Philætiæ we consign
 The court's main gate: to guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd: the faithful swains
 At distance follow, as their king ordains.
 Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands ;
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began :

I mourn the common cause ; for, oh my friends !
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ? 265
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore)

v. 252. *At ev'ry portal, etc.*] This is a very necessary injunction: Ulysses fears not only lest any of the suitors should make his escape, but also lest any of the women who were friends to the suitors should give information to their partisans abroad, and introduce them to their assistance. Eustathius.

v. 266. *Not the lost nuptials*——] No doubt but Eurymachus misrepresents his real sentiments, when he makes the loss of Penelope of little importance ; but his conduct is an exact picture of human nature : when we have used our utmost endeavours to obtain our desires, and have failed in the attempt, the object immediately loses its value, and we would be thought to despise it. To be easy under any disappointment is the result of rea-

But baffled thus I confess'd so far below
Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!

How shall all ages our attempt deride!

Our weakness scorn? Antinous thus reply'd.

Not so, Eurymachus; that no man draws

The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.

Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,

Which thoughtless we in games would waste away; 273

on; but to seem to despise what we have been very solicitous to obtain, arises from the pride of our natures, which persuades us to endeavour to cheat the world into an opinion that we have not been disappointed: the remedy for this disease of our minds, is a regular conduct, and to hold the balance even in all our affairs, that the scale be not raised too high or depressed too low.

v. 274. *Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day.*] Antinous in this reply, speaks, as well as Eurymachus, with dissimulation; he is unwilling to give a true reason, and therefore invents a false one: the true reason why he defers the trial of the bow is, because he fears his inability to draw it; the feigned reason is a pretended piety paid to the day: it was a day to be observed religiously, and he insinuates that all sports upon it are a prophanation of it; and consequently, Apollo being provoked, disables them from drawing the bow, of which he is the patron. This is the reason why he proposes to offer a libation, to atone for the abuse of the day by their diversions. But perhaps the reason why Antinous defers the exercise of the bow to the following day, is not because he thought it unlawful to proceed in it on the festival of Apollo; for why should an exercise which was instituted in honour of that deity, be thought a prophanation of the day? I should therefore rather conclude that the impiety intended by Antinous, was their omission in not offering a sacri-

'Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forgo,
 And here leave fixt the ringlets in a row,
 Now bid the sew'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine,
 So ends our night : before the day shall spring,
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring ;
 Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow.

They heard well-pleas'd : the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :
 The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.
 That right compleat, arose the thoughtful man,
 And thus his meditated scheme began.

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in the royal love
 Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear,
 (Whose sage decision I with wonder hear)

Since to that god before they begun the trial, that he might prosper their endeavours : the conclusion of his speech makes this opinion probable : ' Let us now defer the expensiment, and offer sacrifice in the morning to Apollo, that he may give us success in drawing the bow ; which implies that they were unsuccessful because they had forgot to sacrifice. I will only add, that Antinous mentions a goat as an offering to Apollo ; we have before seen bulls, sheep and bullocks offered to that deity : the reason why a goat is a proper victim, I suppose is because he is a rural god, and patron of shepherds, and therefore all kinds of beasts were offered to him promiscuously.

And if Eurymachus the motion please;
Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.

To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies!

But since till then, this trial you delay, 300

Trust it one moment to my hands to-day:

Gain would I prove, before your judging eyes,

What once I was, whom wretched you despise;

If yet this arm its ancient force retain;

Or if my woes (a long-continu'd train) 305

And wants and insults make me less than man.

Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors eyes,

Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.

Antinous then: O miserable guest!

Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast! 310

Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd

To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd;

Admitted here with princes to confer,

A man unknown, a needy wanderer?

To copious wine this insolence we owe, 315

And much thy betters wine can overthrow:

The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,

Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung;

[v. 318. *Pirithous' roofs, etc.*] The story of the Centaur is this: Pirithous a Lapithite, marrying Hippodamia the daughter of Adrastus, invited the Centaurs and Lapithæ to his nuptials; the Centaurs drinking to great excess, and offering violence to the bride, engaged them in a quarrel; Eurytion was the person who began the disorder, and the war that ensued became fatal to the whole nation of the Centaurs. Horace alludes to this history.

Boundless the Centaur rag'd; till one and all
The heroes rose; and dragg'd him from the hall;

*At nequis modici transfiliat munera liberi,
Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero
Debellata*_____

The Lapithites were a people of Thessaly inhabiting the mountains Pindus and Othrys; the Centaurs were their neighbours, and dwelt in mount Pelion. This war between the Lapithites and the Centaurs probably lasted about a year: for it began on the day of the nuptials of Pirithous, and on the day that his son Polypætus was born he obtained a decisive victory over the Centaurs, and drove them from mount Pelion. Thus lib. 2. ver. 900 of the Iliad.

Thy troops, Argissa, Polypætus leads
And Eleon, shelter'd by Olympus' shades;
Sprung from Pirithous of immortal race,
The fruit of fair Hippodame's embrace,
That day when hurl'd from Pelion's cloudy head
To distant dens the shaggy Centaurs fled.

The history is at large related by Ovid, Metamorph. 12. He calls Eurytion by the name of Eurytus, and describes the nuptial feast in a cave, and not in the palace of Pirithous. Thus Mr. Dryden:

In a cool cave's recess the treat was made,
Whose entrance trees with spreading boughs o'er shade
There one more brutal of the brutal brood,
Or whether wine or beauty fir'd his blood,
Or both at once; beheld with lustful eyes
The bride, at once, resolv'd to make his prize:
Down went the board; and fast'ning on her hair
He seiz'd with sudden force the frighted fair:
'Twas Eurytus began.

his nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
 And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
 Hence with long war the double race was curst,
 fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.

Such fate I prophecy our guest attends, 325
 If here this interdicted bow he bends ;

For shall these walls such insolence contain ;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main ;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
 The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings) 330

Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike exprest ;
 'Tis impious, prince ! to harm the stranger-guest,
 Safe to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335

And some respect Telemachus may claim,
 What if th' immortals on the man bestow
 sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow ?
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord ? 340

Hope so idle never touch'd his brain ;
 When ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Nor be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean.
 Fair ! and wisest of so fair a kind ! 345

Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)
 Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 He dread the all arraigning voice of fame ;
 He dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350

" Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 " Of that brave chief whose bow they could not bend !
 " In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 " And did what all those princes could not do."

Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355
 And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the queen. If fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;
 Wrong and oppression no renown can raise ;
 Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360

v. 357. ——— *If fame engage your views,*

Forbear those acts which infamy pursues]

This answer of Penelope is very severe and very just : Eurymachus (observes Dacier) had said, if this beggar draws the bow, we shall lose our reputation : Penelope answers, it is in vain to be solicitous about your reputation, when your lives are a series of infamous actions : fame is the reward of good, and shame the portion of base and unworthy deeds : it is no dishonour for a prince to be surpassed by a beggar in strength, but a prince is more infamous than a beggar, if his actions betray him to be a worse man ; a base action sinks him into contempt and taints his nobility. The words in Homer are *τι δ' ἄγε σὺ καὶ ταῦτα τ' ἰδέσθης* ; which Eustathius thus explains ; why do you overlook the greater dishonour and are thus afraid of trifles ? and, adds Dacier, the sentiment is just and happy : these princes place disgrace where it is not ; they think it a shame to yield in strength to this stranger, which is really no shame ; mere strength is the praise of a beast, not of a prince : on the contrary, what is really a shame, they think to be none ; they prey upon a king, who was a friend to all mankind, they act a thousand insolent and base deeds and yet apprehend no discredit. This is an unhappy, and I wish it were an unjust, picture of human nature ; we de

The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey;
 And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,
 Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear
 A two edged faulchion and a shining spear,
 Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
 A safe conveyance to his port of rest.

365

O royal mother ! ever honour'd name !

Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim
 A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
 Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.

370

Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
 And all wide Ellis' courser-breeding plain,

To me alone my father's arms descend ;

375

And mine alone they are, to give or lend.

Retire, oh queen ! thy household task resume,

Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom ;

Receive ourselves with false notions both of shame and glory,
 And we may apply the words of Terence to this purpose :

—————*Hic ubi opus est*

Non verentur : illic ubi opus est ibi verentur.

Praise is only to be obtained by virtue, and fame is the certain reward of it : ill-nature or envy may eclipse it, but it will prevail and break out into glory.

v. 377. *Retire, oh queen, etc.*] This speech has been accused of too great a liberty, and as wanting in respect from a son to a mother : Telemachus speaks with authority, when he ought to have shewed obedience and filial duty. But these critics mistake the design and intention

The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
These cares to man belong, and most to me.

380

of Telemachus; he speaks directly to Penelope, but obliquely and intentionally to the suitors: it is for this reason that he says he is supreme in the palace, viz. to let them know that he will not give up the sway into their power. He tells Penelope that the bow shall be used as he directs; this is done to intimidate the suitors, and prepare the way for the delivery of it to Ulysses, contrary to their injunctions to Eumæus.

The verses are the same with those in the 6th of the Iliad. There Hector speaks to Andromache, a tender husband to a fond wife, and the speech was never taxed with any want of love and kindness. In that place Hector remembers that he is an husband, yet forgets not that he is an hero. In this Telemachus deviates not from the duty of a son, yet speaks in the stile and character of a prince.

Eustathius excellently enlarges upon the words of Telemachus: there is an absolute necessity that Penelope should withdraw, that she might not be present at the scene of blood and slaughter. It is for the same reason that the poet introduces Minerva casting her into a profound sleep, that she might be intirely ignorant of the death of the suitors: this is absolutely necessary; for if she had been acquainted that Ulysses was returned, and the suitors slain by his hand, there could have been no room for the interview between Ulysses and Penelope in the succeeding parts of the Odyssey.

But is not Minerva introduced upon too small an occasion, only to cast Penelope into a slumber? would not nature have worked the same effect without the assistance of the goddess? I have already remarked that machines are not always used out of necessity, but frequently for ornament, to dignify the poetry and create surprize by the appearance of a deity. But here the poet brings down Minerva, to give credibility to the story; for though it be true that nature is sufficient to produce this effect, yet that

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd :
 There in her chamber as she sat apart,
 Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
 On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul,
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
 Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
 In slumber clos'd his silver-streaming eyes.

385

Now through the press the bow Eumæus bore,
 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.

390

Hold, lawless rustic ! whither wilt thou go ?
 To whom insensate, dost thou bear the bow ?
 Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
 Far from the sweet society of men,
 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made ;
 If heav'n and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.

395

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
 But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on.

It should operate in that critical and exact moment, when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible : the poet therefore to reconcile the relation to probability, introduces a præternatural sleep, occasioned by the immediate operation of a goddess.

v. 381 ——— the queen admir'd

His sage reply ———]

Penelope is amazed at the free remonstrance of Telemachus ; she is ignorant of the reason of it, yet immediately retires, not doubting but his words flowed from a just cause, and not from a want of filial duty : she is therefore said by the poet to lodge his words in her memory, waiting till time should unfold the mystery. Dacier;

Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words;
 What! hopes the fool to please so many lords? 400
 Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand,
 Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.
 Oh! could the vigour of this arm as well
 Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expell!
 Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
 To fill with tumult the dark courts below!

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 The youth, indulging in the genial day.
 Eumæus thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
 The strifeful bow, and gives it to the king. 410
 Old Euryclea calling then aside,
 Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cry'd).

v. 407. *The suitors with a scornful smile, etc.*] Spordanus believes they laugh out of contempt of Telemachus; Dacier, because they believe the time come which is to end all their doubts by the marriage of Penelope; they hope to draw the bow, and this hope mollifies their anger. But all these reasons (as well as those of Eustathius) seem to be rather invented than natural: we may find a sufficient reason for their laughter, from the sharpness of Telemachus towards Eumæus; they rejoice to see an enemy (for such they esteem Eumæus) misused, and this will likewise give a reason why the poet adds that they ceased their anger against Telemachus, namely, because he gratifies their ill-will by threatening Eumæus.

v. 412. *Hear what Telemachus enjoins, etc.*] It is very evident that this command proceeds not from Telemachus but Ulysses: it was Ulysses who gave directions to shut the door of the womens apartment; but Eumæus is ignorant that Euryclea was acquainted with the return of Ulysses, and therefore speaks as from Telemachus. He

At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well compacted gate;
And if unusual sounds invade their ear,
If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
Let none to call or issue forth presume,
But close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
Clos'd in an instant were the palace gates. 420
In the same moment forth Philætiús flies,
Secures the court, and with a cable ties
The utmost gate; (the cable strongly wrought
Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Ægypt brought;)
Then unperceiv'd and silent, at the board 425
His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,
Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;

knew very well that she would obey the orders of Telemachus, but if she had not been acquainted with the return of Ulysses, she would have made some hesitation, believing the beggar to be really a stranger and not Ulysses. Eustathius.

v. 423. ———the cable strongly wrought.

Of Byblos' reed—————]

The word in the Greek is βύβλινον, which we are not to understand of the Ægyptian Papyrus, but it is derived from βίβλος or βύβλος, a plant growing in the marshes of Ægypt, βοτάνης ἐμπερῆς παπύρου, that bears the resemblance of the Papyrus, as Eustathius explains it. Of this plant the ancients made cordage; on the top of it there grew fibrous threads resembling hair, and thus Strabo describes it, ψιλή ράσδος ἐπ' ἄκρῃ ἔχουσα χαιτήν, "a slender twig, bearing, as it were, hair on the top of it"

v. 428. Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and

Left time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
 Its owner absent, and untry'd so long. 439
 While some deriding——How he turns the bow !
 Some other like it sure the man must know,
 Or else wou'd copy ; or in bows he deals ;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals.——
 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind ! 435
 And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd,
 With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Heedless he heard them ; but disdain'd reply ;
 The bow perusing with exactest eye.
 Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, taught to sing. 440
 High notes responsive to the trembling string,

o'er.] This little particularity is not inserted in vain : Ulysses is ready to engage in a terrible combat ; it is therefore very necessary to be curious in the examination of the bow, to be certain that he might depend upon it ; if he had observed that it had been decayed through time, his prudence would have furnished him with some other instrument. Eustathius is of opinion that this whole bow was made of horn, because *κρως* denotes worms that breed in horn: the bow, says that author, was made of horn, and not of wood, like the Scythian bows. This, it must be confessed, is not entirely satisfactory, because the bows were antiently tipped or pointed at the extremities with horn ; and to this Ulysses may refer : but the other opinion is most probable, and Ovid thus understood it :

Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu

Qui latus argueret corneus arcus erat.

v. 440. *Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, etc.*] Eustathius confesses himself to be greatly pleased with this comparison ; it is very just and well suited to the purpose ;

To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
 Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
 Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro;
 So the great master drew the mighty bow: 445
 And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
 From his essaying hand the string let fly
 Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race, 450
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.
 Signs from above ensu'd: the unfolding sky

the strings of the lyre represent the bow string, and the ease with which the lyrist stretches them, admirably paints the facility with which Ulysses draws the bow. When similitudes are borrowed from an object entirely different from the subject which they are brought to illustrate, they give us a double satisfaction, as they surprize us by shewing an agreement between such things, in which there seems to be the greatest disagreement.

v. 448. ———— *the string let fly*
Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.]

The comparison is not intended to represent the sweetness of the sound, but only the quality and nature of it; and means a harsh or jarring sound, or somewhat rough, *πίστερυ*, as Eustathius interprets it; such a sound as a swallow makes when she sings by starts, and not in one even tenour. The swallow is inharmonious, and Aristophanes uses *χελιδωνι μουσῆιν* in his frogs, to signify those who are enemies to the muses; and here the poet uses it to denote a shrill, harsh, or jarring sound.

v. 452. *Signs from above ensu'd* —] The signal of battle is here given in thunder by Jupiter, as in the eleventh book of the Iliad.

In light'ning burst; Jove thunder'd from on high.

Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty Lord,

He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board :

(Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,

But soon to fly the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the chord he drew,

Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view ;

Then notch'd the shaft, releast, and gave it wing ;

The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,

Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.

The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;

Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince. Nor have I wrought thee shame ;

Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ;

Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost

That antient vigour, once my pride and boast,

Ev'n Jove, whose thunder spoke his wrath, distill'd

Red drops of blood o'er all the fatal field.

And again,

That instant Juno and the martial maid

In happy thunders promis'd Greece their aid.

This prepares us for the greatness of the following action, which is ushered in with thunder from heaven : and we are not surprized to see Ulysses defeat his enemies, when Jupiter declares himself in his favour. Homer calls this thunder a sign and a prodigy : it is a sign, because it predicts the event ; and a prodigy, because the thunder proceeds from a serene sky. Eustathius.

v. 467. ———— *nor have I lost*

That antient vigour——]

Ulysses speaks not thus out of vanity, but solely to con-

I I deserv'd these haughty peers disdain;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train, 470
 In sweet repaste the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning for the genial joy.
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night,
 Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.
 He said; then gave a nod; and at the word 475
 Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
 Fast by his father's side he takes his stand:
 The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

Firm the courage of Telemachus, and his two friends, Eu-
 næus and Philætiüs. He sets his vigour before their eyes,
 that they may have confidence in it in the succeeding en-
 gagement.

v. 471. *In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning———]*

This circumstance is very necessary; Ulysses excites the
 visitors to supper by day-light, because it would be more
 easy for him to assault them while they sat at table: the
 posture would give him some advantage; and he adds *be-
 fore evening*, because if they had supped by the light of
 the torch, upon extinguishing it, they had greatly embar-
 rassed him, and perhaps rendered his designs ineffectual
 through the benefit of the darkness. Neither is it with-
 out reason that he proposes singing and music; he does it
 to draw away their thoughts from any jealousy of intend-
 ed violence; and by this method he gives the assault un-
 expectedly, and begins the slaughter before they are pre-
 pared to make any opposition.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The death of the suitors.

Ulysses begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THEN fierce the heroe o'er the threshold strode;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;

We are now come to the great event or catastrophe of the *Odyssey*, which is the destruction of the suitors. The manner by which the poet conducts it, has been praised and censured, by some as noble and heroic, by others as romantic and incredible: it is therefore highly necessary to vindicate Homer in the chief action of the whole poem, that he may not be found culpable, in the place where he ought to be the most exact and draw his heroe to the best advantage. The objection made against this decisive action is, that the poet makes Ulysses perform impossibilities: no

Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw,
And thus terrific, to the suitor crew.

one person, with such small assistance, being able to destroy above an hundred enemies. It is no answer to say that Pallas descends to aid Ulysses; for it has been already proved, that all incidents which require a divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying it; whereas this action is essential to it. No less a critic than Longinus, *chap. 7.* condemns Homer; for enumerating the faults of the Odyssey, he thus proceeds: 'To these may be added the absurdities he commits, in the account of the destruction of Penelope's suitors.' And Scaliger, *lib. 5.* of his Poetics is of the same opinion: *Ulysses interfecit arcu procos, inter quos et ipsum tantillum esset intervalli: quare omnes simul in eum impetum non fecerunt?* the strength of this objection lies in the omission of the suitors in not rushing at once upon Ulysses in an united body: now this was impossible; he stood upon the threshold in a narrow pass, and by this advantage he was able to make it good against a great inequality of numbers. It is not difficult to bring instances of a like nature from undoubted history: Cocles alone defended the bridge over the Tyber against the whole army of Porsena, and stood unmoveable till the Romans broke it down behind him. And Leonidas the Spartan general defended the pass of Thermopylæ with a small number, against three millions of Persians led by Xerxes; and if he had not been betrayed, he would have probably defeated his whole army. In both these instances there was a greater inequality of numbers, than between Ulysses and the suitors. The reader will be reconciled to the probability of these relations, if he considers that the whole business of war was antiently decided by mere strength of body: fire-arms now set all men upon a nearer level; but in these early ages the strongest person was the greatest hero; a man of superior

One vent'rous game this hand has won to day,
Another, princes ! yet remains to play ;

and uncommon strength drove his enemies before him like an army of boys, and with as much facility. From this observation it is evident that Homer scarce transgresses the bounds of historic truth, when he describes Achilles chasing whole squadrons of Trojans : he wrote according to the manners of his times, and drew after the life, though sometimes he improved a feature to give grace to the picture of his heroë : thus in the scripture from the mere advantage of strength, we see a single Goliath defy the whole armies of Israel.

Rapin commends the conduct of Homer in bringing about the destruction of the suitors. The unravelling the whole *Odyssey* (says that author) by their deaths, is very great, and very becoming an heroë ; that whole story is dressed up in colours so decent, and at the same time so noble, that antiquity can hardly match any part of the narration ; here Homer has displayed himself to the best advantage. I wish Rapin had given his reasons, and not run into a general commendation : but we shall be sufficiently convinced of the judgment of Homer in describing the suitors falling chiefly by Ulysses if we consider the nature of epic poetry. The chief action is to be performed by the heroë of the poem : thus Hector falls by Achilles, Turnus by Æneas : the death of the suitors is the chief action of the *Odyssey*, and therefore it is necessarily to be executed by Ulysses ; for if any other person had performed it, that person would have done an action more noble than the heroë of the poem, and eclipsed his glory. It is for the same reason that the poet refuses all easy methods to re-establish Ulysses : he throws him into difficulties which he is to surmount by his own prowess and magnanimity. Homer might easily have raised an army, and placed Ulysses at the head of it ; but the more difficult way being most conducive to his honour, he rejects all easy methods, shews

Another mark our arrow must attain.

Phœbus assist ! nor be the labour vain.

10

him struggling with infinite hazards, out of which he extricates himself personally by his wisdom and courage. By these means he compleats the character of his hero, leaves a noble image of his worth upon the minds of the spectators, and makes him go off the stage with the utmost applause.

v. 1. *Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode,* etc.] Plato was particularly struck with the beauty of these lines : in his dialogue intituled *Ion*, p. 145. Socrates thus speaks : ‘ When you repeat the verses of Homer ‘ emphatically, and ravish the whole audience, whether it ‘ be the passage where he sings how Ulysses leaps upon the ‘ threshold, discovers himself to the suitors, and pours his ‘ arrows before his feet ; or where Achilles rushes upon ‘ Hector ; or where he paints the lamentations of Hecuba, ‘ Priam, or Andromache ; tell me, are you any longer ‘ master of your own passions ? are you not transported ? ‘ and ravished with divine fury, think yourself present at ‘ the very actions, either in Ithaca or Troy ? ’ It must indeed be allowed, that Homer here paints to the life ; we see Ulysses, his motion, his attitude, and the noble fury with which he begins the onset. The poet interests us in the cause of his hero, and we fight on his side against his enemies.

Eustathius observes that instead of *ράχος*, the Æolians wrote *βράκος* ; an observation of too little importance to have been regarded, if he had not given us a fragment of Sappho as a proof of it.

Τὶς δ' ἀγροῖ᾽ αὖτις ἤλγετ' ἰδὼν
 'Οὐκ ἐπιταμένη τὰ βράκια ἱλκεῖ
 'Ἐπὶ τῶν σφυρῶν ; —

which he thus explains,

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
 And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings,
 Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
 High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl;
 Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath; 15
 Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death:
 For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?
 And fate to numbers by a single hand.

*What rustic beauty dress'd in aukward charms
 Detains my lover from his Sappho's arms?*

The circumstance of throwing the arrows before his feet is not inserted without a reason; Ulysses could reach them from thence with more facility and expedition, than if they had hung at his shoulder in the quiver.

v. 10. *Phæbus assist!*] Ulysses addresses a prayer to Apollo to give success to his present enterprize; he directs it to him, because he is the god of archery; and he concludes in four words, in compliance with the exigence of the time, which will nor permit him to speak at large. This prayer to Apollo confirms my observation, that Penelope proposed the trial of the bow in honour of that deity, and we find that it was customary from a remarkable passage in the Iliad, lib. 4.

*But first to speed thy shaft, address thy vow
 To Lycian Phæbus with the silver bow;
 And swear the firslings of the flock to pay
 On Zelia's altars, to the god of day.*

It is from the urgency of the time that the speech of Ulysses, as well as the prayer, is concise: it would have been very injudicious, when he was ready to assault his enemies unexpectedly, to have prefaced the onset with a long oration; this would have given them an alarm, and time to make an opposition.

v. 18. *And fate to numbers by a single hand.*] This

Full thro' his throat Ulysses' weapon palt,
 And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
 The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows, 24
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose ;
 Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls :
 Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood 25
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall ;

particular is very artful ; the poet while he writes, seems to be surprized at the difficulty of the enterprize he is about to relate. He is in doubt of the great event, and stands still in admiration of it. This has a double effect ; it sets the courage of Ulysses in a strong point of light, who executes what might be almost thought an impossibility ; and at the same time it excellently contributes to make the story credible ; for Homer appears to be held in suspense by the greatness of the action : an intimation that nothing but the real truth and deference to veracity could extort from him a belief of it : thus by seeming to make the relation improbable the poet establishes the probability of it. Eustathius.

v. 22. *A stream of gore burst spouting*——] The word in the original is *αὐλὸς* which commonly signifies a pipe or musical instrument : the ancients (observes Eustathius) used it to denote a fountain ; here therefore it implies a flux or fountain of blood, *κρηνὸς ἑξακόντισμα αἵματος* ; the word therefore very happily paints the blood spouting from the nostrils, as from a fountain ; and in this sense, it gives us a full image of the nature of the wound ; the blood sprung as from a pipe, through the mouth of the wound, or from the veins, through the nostrils.

O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye,
 Each look'd for arms in vain; no arms were nigh : 30
 Aim'ft thou at princes? (all amaz'd they said)
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vulturs shall tear thee — Thus incens'd they spoke, 35
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke,
 Blind as they were; for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke. 40
 Dogs, ye have had your day; ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;

v. 35. — *thus incens'd they spoke,*

While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke.

This passage was looked upon as spurious by the ancients; for they thought it impossible that all the suitors should speak the same sentiment, as by compact, like a Chorus in a tragedy: they appealed to the custom of Homer himself, who continually wrote

ὦδὲ τις ἐπέσχειν.

Eustathius answers, that the poet speaks thus confusedly, to represent the confusion of the suitors at the death of Antinous. Dacier defends him by saying, that all the suitors imagined that Antinous was slain by accident, and therefore the whole assembly having the same sentiment, the poet might ascribe to every member of it the same expression. Either of these solutions explains the difficulty.

v. 42. *Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore.*] The mention of the return of Ulysses from Troy is not inserted casually: he speaks thus to intimidate his enemies, by

While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay :
 Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd,
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd :
 Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of gods above ;
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or fame's eternal voice in future days :
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood,
 From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood ;
 Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide,
 Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd,

If, as thy words import, (he thus began)
 Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
 Great are thy wrongs and much hast thou sustain'd
 In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land ;
 The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
 Lo ! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
 Not love but wild ambition was his guide,
 To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
 These were his aims, but juster Jove deny'd.

recalling to their minds all the brave actions that he had performed before it. Were not this his intention, he would have varied his expression, for in reality he has been absent from Troy near ten years, and returns from the Phæacian, not the Trojan shores. Eustathius.

v. 64. *To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide.*] This expression is judiciously inserted, and with good reason put into the mouth of one of the suitors, namely Euryma-

Since cold in death th' offender lies ; oh spare
 Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r !
 Brass, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray,
 Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay :
 The waste of years refunded in a day.

} 70

thus. The poet is now punishing them for their crimes ; it is therefore very necessary that the reader should be satisfied that they deserve punishment ; for if it be not an act of justice, it is murder. The poet therefore brings them all confessing themselves guilty by the mouth of Eurymachus ; their crime is the intended murder of Telemachus, and the usurpation of the throne of Ulysses. If this had not been set in a clear light, there might have been room for a suspicion that Ulysses inflicted a punishment too great for the guilt of the suitors. For was it a crime that deserved death, to aim at the marriage of Penelope ? this is not to be supposed ; for they took her to be a widow, and might therefore without a crime ask her in marriage. Was death due for the waste and profusion of the riches of Ulysses ? This might have been redressed, by a full repayment, and a just equivalent. Homer therefore, to shew that there is a cause for the severity of the punishment, sets their crimes in open view, which are an intentional murder, and an actual treason. The place likewise where he inserts this circumstance is well chosen, viz. in the place where the punishment is related ; and by this method we acknowledge the equity of it. It is true, Eurymachus throws the guilt upon Antinous as the chief offender ; but all the suitors have been his associates, and approved of all his violent and bloody designs through the Odyssey, and therefore are justly involved in the same punishment ; so that Ulysses punishes rebellious subjects by the authority of a king. Homer likewise observes justice in the death of Antinous ; he is the first in the guilt, and the first that falls by his hero's hands.

'Till then thy wrath is just.—Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd.

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call;
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all;
Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
'Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.

Hence with those coward terms: Or fight or fly,
This choice is left ye, to resist or die
And die I trust ye shall.—He sternly spoke:
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train:

Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain;
But from the threshold shall his darts be sped,
(Whoe'er he be) 'till ev'ry prince lie dead,
Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
And to his shafts obtend these ample boards,
(So need compells). Then all united strive
The bold invader from his post to drive;
The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,
And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

v. 88. *And to his shafts obtend these ample boards.* Eurymachus exhorts the suitors to make use of the tables to oppose Ulysses in the manner of shields; from whence, observes Eustathius, it may be gathered that every suitor had a peculiar table. This may be confirmed from this book; for when Antinous falls, he overturns a table; which, if there had been but one, would have been too large to be thus overthrown: besides he speaks in the plural number, *παρατάς*.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traytor sword,
 And like a lion rush'd against his lord :
 The wary chief the rushing foe repress, 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast :
 His failing hand deserts the list'd sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board !
 Before him wide, in mixt effusion roll
 Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full thro' his liver past the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground ;
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.
 Next bold Amphinomus his arm extends 105
 To force the pass : the godlike man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus ! prevents th' attack,
 The brazen weapon driving thro' his back,

v. 91. *The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste.*] It is impossible but that the suitors must have many friends amongst the Ithacans. Interest or ill-humour engages men in faction ; but this is not the full import of the sense of Homer : the Ithacans were ignorant that Ulysses was returned, and no wonder therefore if they had engaged in defence of the princes of their land, against a stranger and a beggar ; for such in appearance was Ulysses.

v. 108 *The brazen weapon driving thro' his back.*] Eustathius, and Spondanus from him, interpret this passage very much to the disadvantage of the courage of Telemachus : they observe that he is yet new to the horrors of war, and therefore wanting the heart to meet his enemy in the front, gives him this wound between the shoulders : that as soon as he has given the blow, out of fear he leaves the spear in the wound ; an action as dis-

Thence thro' his breast its bloody passage tore ;
 Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor,
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.
 He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear
 The long incumbrance of the weighty spear
 To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between, and use the shorten'd sword.

reputable, as to throw away the shield in battle; and lastly, that it is fear that suggests to his mind the expedient to fetch the arms, a pretext to be distant from danger. But it is not difficult to defend Telemachus. Amphimachus was assaulting Ulysses, and consequently his back was turned towards Telemachus, and this occasions the wound in that part. This combat is not a combat of honour, where points of ceremony are observed; Telemachus was therefore at liberty to destroy his enemy by any methods, without any imputation of cowardice; especially considering the inequality of the parties. Neither is it out of fear that he quits his spear; but from a dictate of wisdom: he is afraid lest some of the suitors should attack him while he is disengaging it, and take him at an advantage, while he has no weapon to use in his own defence; besides, he has no farther occasion for it; he hastes away to provide other arms; not only for himself, but for Ulysses and his friends; and this is so far from being the suggestion of fear, that it is the result of wisdom.

There is some difficulty in the expression *προπρὸς ῥύψας*; the meaning of it is, lest he should receive a descending blow: the word is an adjective, and Eustathius tells us that *χαρὶ* is to be understood; I should rather chuse *φασγάνῳ*, which immediately precedes, it being as good sense to say, a wound is given by a descending sword, as a descending hand.

With speedy ardour to his fire he flies,
 And, arm, great father ! arm (in haste he cries)
 Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile jav'lines, and for helm and shield ;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply ;
 Lest thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost. 125

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies ;
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his fire he bears :

V. 117.

—arm (in haste he cries.)]

Homer almost constantly gives the epithet *πτερόεσσα* to *ῥήματα*; *winged words*. Plutarch, in his treatise upon Garrulity, gives us the meaning of it. A word (says that author) while it remains unspoken is a secret, but being communicated, it changes its name into common rumour; it is then flown from us; and this is the reason why Homer calls words *winged*: he that lets a bird fly from his hand, does not easily catch it again; and he that lets a word slip from his tongue cannot recall it; it flies abroad, and flutters from place to place every moment. It has indeed in some passages a still closer meaning; when a person speaks with precipitation, the epithet expresses the swiftness of the speech, the words are winged; it is here applied with particular propriety; Telemachus asks a question in the compass of four lines, and receives an answer in two from Ulysses; the time not allowing any delay.

At once in brazen Panoply they shone.

130

At once each servant brac'd his armour on ;
Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand :

Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground. 135

Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,

Against the wall he set the bow unbent :

And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,

And now his hands two beamy jav'lines wield ;

He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd 140

O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.

v. 137. *Against the wall he set the bow-unbent.* The poet may be thought too circumstantial in the disposal of the bow ; but there is a reason for it ; he shews Ulysses placed it out of the reach of the suitors, who, if they had seized the bow, might have furnished themselves with arrows from the dead bodies of their friends, and employed them against Ulysses : this caution was therefore necessary. Eustathius.

v. 142. *There stood a window near, whence looking down,*

From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town.

The word in the Greek is *ἀγροθύνη*, *janua superior*, and it is likewise used a little lower. It has given great trouble to the commentators to explain the situation of these two passages. Dacier imagines that by the former there was a descent into the court-yard, and so to the street ; but this cannot be true : for Agelaus exhorting his associates to seize this passage, makes use of the word *ἀνίστασθαι*, which signifies *to ascend*, and not to *descend* into

A double strength of valves secur'd the place,

A high and narrow, but the only pass :

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the court-yard : besides, he bids them raise the people by shouting to them, which seems to imply, that this place overlooked the streets, from whence a shout might be heard by the people. Ὀρσοθύρη (observes Eustathius) is θύρη εἰς ἣν ὄρνυται τῆς δόλων ἰδεῖν ἐκείθεν, that is, 'a door by which a person ascends to obtain a prospect : ' this probably led to the roof of the porch of the palace fronting the street, from whence a person standing in the open air, and shouting, might raise the city ; or as for greater clearness it is here translated a window, which answers all these purposes.

But there is still a difficulty arising from the word λαύρη, which is thus solved by Eustathius ; λαύρη ἐστὶν ὁ πρὸς τῇ ὀρσοθύρῃ ἀγὰν στενωπός, that is, a narrow passage leading to this private window or door ; and he afterwards interprets it by στενὴ ὁδός.

From what has been observed, it appears evidently that there was another passage to the upper apartments of the palace : for this was guarded by Eumæus, and was inaccessible, and consequently Melanthius conveys the arms to the suitors by some other stair-case. This Homer expresses by ἀναρράγας μεγάρο ; the former word is very well explained by Hesychius ; it signifies the passages of the palace leading from chamber to chamber, or the διόδοι of the apartments. Πῶγῃ properly denotes a rupture, and here represents the openings of the passages from room to room. The ancients thought this whole passage so obscure, that they drew a plan of these inward passages of the palace, as Eustathius informs us ; in this they figured the porch, the higher aperture, the other stair-case, and the room where the arms were laid. But Dacier starts another difficulty : if Melanthius could go up to the room where the arms lay, why could he not go from thence into the courts of the palace, and raise the city ? the answer is, because the arms were placed in an inward

The cautious king, with all preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there :
 When Agelaus thus : Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town ? the town shall force the door, *WA*
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more.

Melanthius then : That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
 But other methods of defence remain,
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train ; 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said ; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears :

apartment, and there was no passage from thence into the palace-yards. Her mistake arose from her opinion that there was an entry into the palace by the *igrobyen*, which opinion is refuted in the beginning of this annotation. If indeed Telemachus had brought down the arms this way, then there must have been a passage for Melanthius to the place from whence Agelaus bids him raise the city ; for if Telemachus had passed to the armory by it, why might not Melanthius from it ? But this is not the case ; for this door or window is not mentioned till Telemachus has furnished Ulysses and his friends with armour ; and consequently Homer cannot intend that we should understand that Telemachus ascended to the armory by it.

v. 159. *Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears.*] Aristarchus, remarks Eustathius, blamed this description as incredible ; for how could one person be able to carry such a load of armour at one time ? but we are not to make this supposition ; the poet speaks indefinitely, and leaves us at liberty to conjecture that

All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160

A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears. 160

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe,

On ev'ry side he sees the labour grow :

Oh curst event ! and oh unlook'd-for aid !

Melanthius or the women have betray'd—— 165

Oh my dear son !——The father, with a sigh !

Then ceas'd ; the filial virtue made reply.

Falshood is folly, and 'tis just to own

The fault committed ; this was mine alone ;

My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170

And hence the villain has supply'd their war.

Run, good Eumæus then, and (what before

I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door :

Melanthius brought them at several times ; thus a little lower we find him going again for arms to furnish the rest of the suitors.

v. 172. *Run, good Eumæus, etc.*] This passage, where Telemachus bids Eumæus go and see who brings the arms, proves that Telemachus did not before absent himself from the battle out of cowardice ; here he chuses to partake the danger with Ulysses, and sends Eumæus and Philætius to execute his orders ; a sign that he does not consult his safety at the expence of his honour. Eustathius.

But it may seem extraordinary, that Ulysses and Telemachus should be in doubt to know the person who brought the arms to the suitors ; especially when Agelaus had held a public conference with Melanthius in order to it ; but, answers Eustathius, they spoke with a low voice, and at a proper distance from Ulysses. It may also be objected, that Melanthius could not possibly bring the arms without the observation of Ulysses and his friends. To solve this difficulty we must have recourse to the se-

Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son.

175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain.
Not unobserv'd. Eumæus watchful ey'd,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side.

The miscreant we suspected takes that way;
Him, if this arm be powerful, shall I slay?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed,
From thy own hand, of this detested deed?

180

Not so (reply'd Ulysses) leave him there,
For us sufficient is another care;
Within the stricture of this palace wall
To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall.

185

cond private door, or *ἀγροθύς*, mentioned in a former annotation: by this passage he ascends and descends without a discovery; that passage standing in such a situation, as not to be visible to those who were on the opposite side of the palace. What may seem to contradict this observation is, what Homer afterwards adds, for he directly tells us, that Eumæus observed that the person who brought the arms was Melanthius; but that expression may only imply, that he saw Melanthius going from the rest of the company, and halting toward that ascent, and therefore justly concludes him to be the person.

v. 187. *To keep inclos'd his masters*—] It may be asked, when Eumæus retires from the guard of the passage, what hinders the suitors from seizing it, and by it giving notice to the city of their danger? What Ulysses here says obviates this objection. He tells Eumæus, that he and Telemachus will defend it against all the efforts of his enemies: by this expression he gives us to understand, that Telemachus shall post himself in the place of

Go you and seize the felon! backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind;
On this, his body by strong cords extend,
And on a column near the roof suspend;
So study'd tortures his vile days shall end.

} 190
}

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste,
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,

As round the room in quest of arms he goes:

195

(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes)

One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield

Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,

Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,

The brass corroded, and the leather torn:

200

Eumæus, and make it good till he has executed justice
upon Melanthius.

v. 197. *One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield*] We see Melanthius after a diligent search finds only one helm and one shield; and the shield is described as almost spoiled with age: from hence Eustathius gathers that there were no more left in the armory; for it is probable that Melanthius would not have returned with so few arms if he could have found more; nor would he have brought the decayed shield, if he could have supplied himself with a stronger; so that all the arms of Ulysses were seventeen helmets, twelve at first delivered to the suitors by Melanthius, one more he was now bringing, and Ulysses and his friends were in possession of four: there were the same number of shields, and twenty spears, twelve given to the suitors, and eight to the assistance of Ulysses. This was his private armory for the defence of his palace; and we are to conclude, that these were the whole arms of the nation; there probably was a public repository for armour for the public use of their armies against their enemies.

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stept,
 Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt ;
 Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
 And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
 Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil
 At ev'ry point their master's rigid will :
 First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,
 Then strengthen'd cords involv'd his body round ;
 So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,
 The howling felon swung from side to side.

205

210

Eumæus scoffing, then with keen disdain :
 There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain !
 On that soft pillow, from that envy'd height
 First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light ;
 So timely rise, when morning streaks the east,
 To drive thy victims to the suitors feast.

215

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,
 Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :
 Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post
 Near great Ulysses ; four against an host.
 When lo ! descending to her hero's aid
 Jove's daughter Pallas, war's triumphant maid :
 In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;
 Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd.

220

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ;
 Oh ev'ry sacred name in one ! my friend !
 Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown :
 What-e'er through life's whole series I have done
 Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,
 And aiding this one hour, repay it all.

225

230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd,
And first loud-threat'ning, Agelaus cry'd.

Mentor, beware, nor let that tongue persuade 235
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;

Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the sire's and son's commix thy blood.

What hop'st thou here ? Thee first the sword shall slay,
Then lop thy whole posterity away ; 240

Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send ;

With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend ;

Thus, and thus only shalt thou join thy friend.

His barb'rous insult ev'n the goddess fires,
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires. 245

Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind ?

v. 246. *Art thou Ulysses, etc.*] Pallas is here an allegorical deity, and represents the courage and wisdom which was exerted by Ulysses in the destruction of the suitors: the poet puts the words into the mouth of a goddess, to give ornament and dignity to his poetry ; but they are only the suggestions of his own heart, which reproaches him for being so slow in punishing the insolence of his adversaries. If we take them in this sense they will be in the nature of a soliloquy: the poet indeed was obliged to introduce a deity, to give importance to the decisive action of his whole poem: thus Jupiter assists Æneas in Virgil; Minerva, Achilles in the Iliad, and the same goddess Ulysses here in the Odyssey. I very well know, that all these passages have been blamed by some critics, as derogatory to the courage of these heroes, who cannot conquer their enemies but through the assistance

That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,
 Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead?
 And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust
 Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust?
 If this, when Helen was the cause, were done,
 What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son?
 Rise then in combat, at my side attend ;
 Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
 And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
 The fire and son's great acts, with-held the day ;
 By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
 And level'd pois'd the wings of victory :
 Then with a change of form eludes their fight
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unpertciv'd, enjoys the rising fight.

of a deity. The reader may be pleas'd to look back for a full vindication of Homer and Virgil, to Lib. 3. Note 43. of the *Odyssey*.

We may observe that a deity descends to assist Ulysses, but that the suitors are left to their own conduct: this furnishes us with a very just and pious moral, and teaches us that heaven guards and assists good men in adversity, but abandons the wicked, and lets them perish for their follies.

v. 262. *Perch'd like a swallow*—] We have seen deities, both in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, changing themselves into the shape of birds: thus, lib. 7. v. 67. of the *Iliad*.

Th' Athenian maid, and glorious god of day,
 With silent joy the settling host survey,

Damastor's son, bold Agelaus, leads
 The guilty war ; Eurynomus succeeds ; 265
 With these, Pisander great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus : these six survive,
 The best of all the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand, 270
 Thus Agelaus rous'd the lagging band.

The hour is come, when yon' fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor :
 Lo ! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast ;
 The four remain, but four against an host. 275
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart :
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain :
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain.

In form like vulturs, on the beech's height
 They sit conceal'd, and wait the future fight.

This perhaps may be the occasion of all such fictions.
 The superstition of the heathen world induced the ancients to believe that the appearance of any bird in a critical hour, was a sign of the presence of a divinity, and by degrees they began to persuade themselves, that the gods appeared to them in the form of these birds. Hence arose all the honours paid to augurs, and the reliance upon divination drawn from the flight of birds : and almost every deity had a bird sacred to him. The eagle to Jupiter, the peacock to Juno, *etc.* Pallas here takes the form of a swallow, because it is a domestic bird, and therefore may be said to appear within the walls of the palace with most probability.

Then all at once their mingled lances threw, 286
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew;
 In vain! Minerva turn'd them in her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death;
 With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls; 285
 The storm past innocent. The god-like man
 Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began.

'Tis now, brave friends, our turn, at once to throw
 (So speed them heav'n) our jav'lines at the foe.
 That impious race to all their past misdeeds 290
 Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.

He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew:
 Great Demoptolemus, Ulysses flew;
 Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
 The goat-herd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart; 295
 Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls;
 Their fall in thunder ecchoes round the walls.
 The rest retreat: the victors now advance,
 Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.

v. 298. ——— *The victors now advance,*

Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.]

The danger beginning to abate by the fall of the chief of the enemy, Ulysses advances from his stand: there was a necessity for this conduct: Ulysses and his three assistants had killed four enemies with their spears; and consequently the poet was obliged to supply them with fresh weapons, otherwise, if they had discharged their spears once more, they must have been left naked and defenceless, having only two a-piece brought by Telemachus. This observation shews the exactness which Homer maintains in his relation.

Again the foe discharge the steely show'r; 300

Again made frustrate by the virgin pow'r.

Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,

Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall;

Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,

Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead. 305

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast;

Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd;

And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd,

On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd;

Not lessen'd of their force, so slight the wound, 310

Each sung along, and drop'd upon the ground.

Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamas, to bear

Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.

By the bold son Amphimedon was slain;

And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315

Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,

And thus Philætius gloried o'er the dead.

There end thy pompous vaunts, and high disdain;

Oh sharp in scandal, voluble and vain!

How weak is mortal pride! To heav'n alone 320

Th' event of actions and our fates are known:

coffer, behold what gratitude we bear:

The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

: 1830

v. 323 *The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.*

This refers to a passage in the latter end of the twentieth

book of the *Odyssey*, where Ctesippus throws the foot of

bullock at Ulysses. Philætius here gives him a mortal

wound with his spear, and tells him it is a return for the

foot of the bullock. Eustathius informs us, that this be-

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Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell ;
 Fast by, Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way
 Through all his bowels : down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confest'd ; aloft she spreads
 The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads ;
 The dreadful Ægis blazes in their eye ;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and the fly :

came a proverb, τῦτο τὸ ἀντὶ ποδοῦς ξυνήιον, to express a return of evil for evil ; the like may be observed of the death of Antinous, who was killed as he lifted the bowl to drink.

Πολλὰ μεταξὺ πίλει κύλικος καὶ χεῖλος ἄκρῳ.

Which is exactly rendered by our proverb, *Many things happen between the cup and the lip*. Thus likewise the kindness of Cyclops was used proverbially, to denote a severe injury disguised under a seeming civility, that monster having promised Ulysses mercy, but it was only the mercy to devour him last. These little instances prove the great veneration the ancients had for Homer.

v. 332. *The dreadful Ægis*——] This shield is at large described, lib. 5. of the Iliad.

——round the margin roll'd ;
 A fringe of serpents, hissing, guard the gold ;
 Here all the terrors of grim war appear ;
 Here rages force, here tremble flight and fear ;
 Here storm'd contention, and here fury frown'd,
 And the dire orb portentous Gorgon crown'd.

We see the terrible effects which the shield causes are created by the poet into a kind of beings, and animated to fight on the side of his hero.

Confus'd, distracted, through the rooms they fling,
Like oxen madden'd by the breeze's sting, 235
When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring.

v. 335. *Like oxen*, etc.] The fury of the battle being now over, Homer pauses with the action; and letting his fancy rove in search of foreign ornaments, beautifies and enlivens the horrors of it with two similitudes, drawn from subjects very distant from the terrors they are brought to illustrate. The former of an herd of cattle, represents the confusion and affright of the suitors; the latter of the birds, their weakness and unavailing flight. The gadfly shews the fury and close pursuit of Ulysses and his assistants, the hawks their courage, and superior power. Eustathius.

Virgil at large describes this breeze fly. Georg. 3.

About th' Alburnian groves, with holly green,
Of winged insects mighty swarms are seen:
This flying plague, to mark its quality,
Oestros the Grecians call, Asylus, we:
A fierce loud buzzing breeze; their stings draw blood;
And drive the cattle gadding through the wood,
Seiz'd with unusual pains they loudly cry, etc. Dryd.

This description shews that this is no ill-chosen similitude; it very well paints the suitors flying in an herd, and Ulysses wounding them as they fly.

The latter simile from the hawks, affords some curiosity in regard to the antient manner of that sport. It is evident, says Dacier, that this passage is an instance, that flying of birds of prey, in the nature of our hawking was practised by the ancients: the nets called by Homer *νεφέα*, were fixed in the plain ground; the fowlers, with their

Not half so keen, fierce vulturs of the chase
Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race.

falcons, took their station upon the adjoining eminences; when the birds, driven from this rising ground, flew to the plain, they met with the nets, and endeavouring to escape them, crowded into flocks; then the hawk, or vultur, was loosed, and descending upon his prey, slew them in multitudes; for the birds were incapable of resisting, and at the same time were afraid of the nets, and therefore could not escape: this is the reason why the fowlers are said to rejoice at the sport: a plain indication, that the poet intended to describe the sportman's flying his bird at the prey. That the word *νέφια* signifies *nets*, is evident from Aristophanes, *μὰ νέφιας, μὰ δίκτυα*, that is, *I swear by my nets*: Hesychius is of the same opinion, *νέφια*, says that author, signifies the *clouds*, *καὶ λίνα θρηπτικά*, *hunters nets*. Eustathius directly affirms, that in his time this sport was practised in many countries; and the place where the nets were fixed was called *νεφελουσία*. That author construes these words *νέφια πλώσονται, ἔσονται*, as if *ἐπὶ* were to be understood, to express the rushing of the birds against the net; but there is no occasion for this violence to the text, for by joining *νέφια* with *πλώσονται*, the period will be plain, and signify, that thro' fear of the net they fly with violence to avoid it. M. Dacier has a pretty observation upon this sport; and shews us that the ancients were used to take even deer with nets, by flying at them birds of prey, in conformity to this description of Homer: this is manifest from a passage in Arrian, l. 2. c. 1. where he speaks of men placing their fears where they have nothing to fear: *Λαῖον. ἡμῶς τὸ τῶν ἰλαφῶν πάσχομεν ὅτε φοβῆσθαι φαύχονται καὶ ἰλαφὰ τὰ πηλὰ, πῶς τρέπονται; καὶ πρὸς τινα (τόπον) ἀναχθῆναι ὡς ἀφ' αὐτῶν; πρὸς τὰ δίκτυα, καὶ οὕτως ἀπολλύονται, ἰσχυράσθαι τὰ φοβερὰ καὶ τὰ θάρραλα;* "For what remains, we are like deer, for they fearing the birds; that are flown at them, what course do they take? to

When the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net: 440
 No help, no flight; but wounded ev'ry way,
 Headlong they drop: the fowlers seize the prey.
 On all sides thus they double wound on wound,
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground;
 Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
 And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls:

The wretched augur thus for mercy calls.

"what place of refuge do they run to be in security? to
 "the nets, and so perish, mistaking their dangers for their
 greatest safety." Minerva, in this similitude, is the bird
 of prey descending from the mountain, for she it is who
 scatters the suitors by displaying her Ægis from the roof
 of the palace: this is the opinion of Eustathius: but in the
 winding up of the comparison, Homer plainly by the vul-
 tur denotes Ulysses and his assistants (tho' perhaps not ex-
 clusively of the goddess) for in the application he writes,

"Ὡς ἄρα τοὶ μνηστῆρες ἐπισύμνοιο κατὰ δῶμα
 Τύπλον.——"

v. 347. *Leiodes first before the victor falls:*

The wretched augur———]

This Leiodes is the last person who survives of the suitors;
 he was an augur and a prophet, and ought therefore to
 have followed wiser counsels: he tells Ulysses that he en-
 deavoured to restrain the suitors from their insolence; but
 he himself aspired to the bed of Penelope, and conse-
 quently was an associate in their conspiracies. Leiodes falls
 without resistance; and indeed it would have been very im-
 proper to have represented him encountering Ulysses in a
 single combat, when above an hundred had not been able
 to stand before him: besides, fighting is out of the cha-

O gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed:
Still undishonour'd or by word or deed 350

Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd
Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest:
Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well,
Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
Oh spare an augur's consecrated head. 355
Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art! for that detested band
Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land:
Against Ulysses have thy vows been made;
For them, thy daily orisons were paid: 360
Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires:
One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
Which Agelaus' dying hand forsook;
Full through his neck the weighty faulchion sped: 365
Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,
Phemius the sweet, the heav'n instructed bard.
Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands;
The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands; 370
Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,

character of Leiodes; he was not a man of the sword, but an augur: it would therefore have been contrary to his function, to have drawn him engaging Ulysses; and consequently it is with great propriety that he is described saluting not as a warrior, but as a suppliant.

v. 372. *Dubious*———*if to fly*
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh, etc.]

Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
And oft Ulysses smoaking victims laid.

This altar of Jupiter Hercæus stood in the palace-yard; so called from ἔρκος, *the out-wall enclosing the court-yard*. It stood in the open air, where they sacrificed to Jupiter the guardian, or protector; and within the palace to Ζεύς ἐρκύκος.

Jupiter was worshipped under the same name by the Romans. Thus Ovid.

Cui nihil Hercæi profuit ara Jovis.

The altar mentioned by Virgil, *Æn.* 2. was of the same nature: to which Priam fled at the taking of Troy.

Uncover'd but by heav'n, there stood in view
An altar; near the hearth a lawrel grew,
Dodder'd with age; whose boughs encompass'd round
The household gods, and shed the holy ground.

These altars were places of sanctuary, and by flying to them the person was thought to be under the immediate protection of the deity, and therefore in some cases inviolable. The same practice prevailed among the Jews; for we find frequently in the scriptures, that it was customary to fly to the altar as to a place of refuge, which is evident from the expression of laying hold on the horns of the altar. This is the reason why Phemius entertains an intention to fly to the altar of Jupiter Hercæus. Plutarch in his treatise upon music, informs us, that Demodocus was reported to have wrote a poem, intitled, *The destruction of Troy*: and Phemius another, called, *The return of the Grecian captains*: but by these poets, Homer probably means only himself, who was author of two poems, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Homer, remarks Eustathius, plainly shews us the notion he had of the great qualifications that were necessary to form a good poet. He must sing of men and gods; that is, be thoroughly ac-

His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
Between the laver and the silver throne :

quainted with all things, both human and divine ; he must be *αὐτοδιδάκτος*, or *self-taught* ; that is, as we express it, he must be a genius ; he must have a natural ability, which is indeed to be improved but not capable of being learned by study : he adds, that besides this felicity of nature, he must have an heavenly inspiration : this implies that he must have a kind of enthusiasm, an elevation of soul which is not to be obtained by labour and industry, and consequently is the gift of heaven. Thus Pindar,

——σοφᾶς ὁ πολ-

λὰ εἰδὼς φυᾶ.

Μαθόντες δὲ, λάβροι.

Παύλασσι, κόρακις ὥς,

Ἀχραντὶα γαρνέτον.

The bards, whom true poetic flame inspires,
Receive from nature more than human fires ;
In vain from arts alone they tune the voice,
Like crows they croak, nor is it song, but noise.

This is the *mens divini* of Horace ; by industry men may become great scholars and philosophers ; but no man was ever a great poet, without being in the strictest sense a great genius. I will only add, that Aristotle in his Rhet. 1. 7. quotes this hemistich *αὐτοδιδάκτος*, etc. as an instance that natural are more excellent than acquired abilities ; he gives the reason of it ; namely, because they are more uncommon, and not obtained by human industry. Maximus Tyrius has a criticism upon it. How, objects that author, can it be said, that the poet is self-taught, if the gods teach him to sing ? The answer is easy, Homer means, that he has no human instructor, and only opposes natural to acquired abilities. It is observable, that Maximus Tyrius erroneously quotes the verse, Dissert. 22. for he writes, *Θεὸς δὲ μοι ὅπασαν ὁμήν*, instead of

Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began.

O king! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380

A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
For dear to gods and men is sacred song.

Self-taught I sing; by heav'n and heav'n alone
The genuine seeds of poesy are sown;

And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
To gods alone, and godlike worth, we pay.

Save then the poet, and thyself reward;
'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record;

That here I sung, was force and not desire;
This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire: 390

And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay
Nor servile flatt'ry stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
His fire approaches, and the bard defends.

O mix not, father, with those impious dead 395
The man divine; forbear that sacred head;

Ὀδὸς δὲ πάλιν ὁ φέρων οἶκός
Πατρόκλῳ ἀνίσχυον

He likewise puts the words in the mouth of Demodocus,
which are here spoken by Phemius; he undoubtedly quot-
ed by memory.

What Homer adds after all this, to raise the character
of his poet, is very remarkably moral. That he never
turned his talents to flattery, nor was it voluntarily that
he served or entertained unworthy men, but was merely
compelled to it by their violence.

Medon the herald too our arms may spare,
 Medon, who made my infancy his care;
 If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
 Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live.

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
 Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
 Wrapt in a new slain ox's ample hide:
 Swift at the word he cast his screen aside,
 Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears,
 And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears:

O prince! O friend! lo here thy Medon stands;
 Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
 Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
 Whose guilty glories now are set in blood.

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye:
 Be bold, on friendship and my son rely;
 Live, an example for the world to read,
 How much more safe the good than evil deed:

v. 413. *Live, an example for the world to read
 How much more safe the good than evil deed.*

The moral intended to be taught by the fable of the Odyssey is, to shew virtue, though long in distress, at length triumphant; and vice, though long successful, unfortunate in the conclusion: it is to this effect that Ulysses here speaks; and to give his words more weight he throws them into a sentence. It is with excellent judgment that it is here placed by Homer: the punishment is no sooner over but Ulysses declares the equity of it; he speaks to all mankind, and lays it down as an universal truth that virtue is to be preferred before vice, and invites us to the practice of the former, by shewing the success of it in his own victory; and deters us from the latter, by represent-

Thou, with the heav'n taught bard, in peace resort 415

From blood and carnage to yon open court:

Me other work requires——With tim'rous awe

From the dire scence th'exempted two withdraw,

Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move

To the bright altars of protector Jove. 420

Mean while Ulysses search'd the dome, to find

If yet there live of all th' offending kind.

Not one! compleat the bloody tale he found,

All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.

So, when by hollow shores the fisher-train 425

Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,

And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain,

ing the ill consequences of it in the destruction of the
suitors.

v. 425. *So, when by hollow shores the fisher train*

Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main.]

The ancients, remarks Eustathius, observed, that this is the
only place where Homer manifestly speaks of catching fish
with nets; for these words, lib. 5: v. 595. of the Iliad,

——and sweep away

Sons, fires, and wives, an undistinguish'd prey;

which, in the Greek, is expressed by ἀψίσι λίνα ἀλόντι
πανόρεα, may be applied to the taking of beasts or birds
by nets, and consequently ought not to be appropriated
to fishing. Thus it is evident that this art was practised
very antiently amongst the Grecians; it was likewise
known early to the Hebrews and Ægyptians. Thus Isaiah
xix. 8. "The fishers (of Ægypt) shall mourn, all they
"that cast the angle into the brook shall lament, and they
"that spread nets upon the waters shall languish." And
that they fished the seas with nets is evident from Ezek.

All naked of their element, and bare,
 The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air;
 Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey,
 Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
 Old Euryclea, to the deathful hall;
 The son observant not a moment stays;
 The aged governess with speed obeys;
 The sounding portals instant they display;
 The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
 On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
 All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
 So the grim lion from the slaughter comes,
 Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,

xxvi. 5. "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in
 "the midst of the sea." The comparison is very just;
 and the last line of it gives a peculiar honour and distinc-
 tion to Ulysses: that hero is the sun who kills the suitors,
 in application of the similitude.

v. 440. *So the grim lion, etc.*] Eustathius agrees with
 an observation which has been made concerning the simi-
 litudes of the *Odyssey*, lib. 16. He here remarks, that
 comparisons are as rare in the *Odyssey* as they are fre-
 quent in the *Iliad*; and that the difference arises from the
 difference of the subjects: the subject of the *Iliad* is great,
 and therefore properly illustrated by noble images, and a
 variety of sublime comparisons; the subject of the *Odyf-*
sey requires to be related in a less exalted stile, and with
 greater simplicity. This book is an undeniable testimo-
 ny of the truth of this observation: the story of it ap-
 proaches nearer to the nature of the *Iliad* than any other
 book of the *Odyssey*, and we find it more adorned with
 comparisons than almost all the rest of the poem.

His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed compleat : 443
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd :
The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said.

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, controul
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust ; 450
Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust ;

v. 450. *T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust.*] The word in the original is *ὀλόλυξα*, and here signifies a *voice of joy*. In other places it is used to denote a *sorrowful lamentation*. See note 49. of the third *Odyssey*. I am wonderfully pleased with the noble sentiment of Ulysses contained in these lines. It is full of piety and humanity : good-nature feels for the sufferings of any of its fellow-creatures. Even in punishment we are to remember, that those we punish are men, and inflict it as a necessary justice, not as a triumph. Such here is the conduct of Ulysses ; he is so far from rejoicing in his success, that he restrains others from it ; and seems to be a mourner at the funeral of his enemies. He falls into the same thought with Job xxxi. 29. " If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him, if I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul, *etc.*"

Were a prince, who makes war for glory, to stand upon a field of battle immediately after victory, amidst the horrors of the dead, and the groans of the dying ; it would surely mortify his ambition to see such horrible monuments of his glory. If the death of thousands of brave men were weighed in a scale against a name, a popular empty breath of a multitude, and if reason held the balance, how easily would the disproportion be discovered !

Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
 The good and bad were equal in their mind.
 Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
 And each now wails an unlamented shade. 455
 But thou sincere ! Oh Euryclea, say,
 What maids dishonour us, and what obey ?

Then she : In these thy kingly walls remain
 (My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
 Taught by my care to call the fleece, or weave, 460
 And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive ;
 Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
 Nor me nor chaste Penelope obey ;

v. 453. *The good and bad were equal in their mind.*
 There is some obscurity in these words, "they neither
 " respected the good nor the bad man ;" or, as Homer
 expresses it,

οὐ καὶ οὐκ ἴδμεν ἰσθλόν.

A reverence is due to a good man, and consequently it is
 a crime to deny it ; but why should it be objected to the
 suitors as a fault that they despised the bad man, whose
 actions deserve to be despised ? Eustathius answers, καὶ
 may signify ταπεινός, or a person of a low condition, the
 poor man, or the stranger ; and this justifies the assertion ;
 but perhaps the poet uses it to shew that they des-
 pised and outraged all men universally without distinction ;
 whether persons of probity or dishonesty ; they con-
 sidered not the condition of others, but were insolent to
 all mankind.

v. 462. *Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way.*
 It is remarkable, observes monsieur Bayle, that of fifty
 women, so few as twelve only should yield to the desires
 of the suitors. But it is not indeed affirmed, that they
 were ever tempted by any importunities. Plutarch, in

Nor fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
 Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
 Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
 There wake her with the news——The matron cry'd;
 Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)

this treatise, of Education, informs us, that Bion wittily applied this passage to the study of the sciences: when the suitors failed in their attempts upon Penelope, they condescended to address her maids: so men who are not capable of understanding philosophy, busy themselves with studies of no value.

v. 464. *Not fits it that Telemachus command
 (Young as he is) his mother's female band,*] This, remarks Eustathius, is an instance of the maternal wisdom of Penelope; and, at the same time, a vindication of Telemachus, for not restraining the insolence and immodesty of these female servants; they were out of his jurisdiction, and immediately under the protection of Penelope. But is not this removal of the fault from Telemachus, an imputation upon the queen? and if the son wanted an excuse for not punishing their crimes, is the mother unblameable, who not only permits the disorder of their lives, but forbids Telemachus to redress it? Is it to be supposed that this chaste matron was more indulgent to female frailty than Telemachus? The true reason is, Telemachus could not, and Penelope durst not, shew a just resentment against these criminals: they had too great an interest in the chief of the suitors to stand in awe of the queen, or fear her vengeance. This is evident, for Penelope herself was, in a great measure, in their power, and the same authority that supported the suitors in their insolence against the queen, would support these females against her revenge for their immodesty.

v. 469. *Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)*] Ulysses gives this injunction, because he is unwilling to wound the

Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds. 470

In haste the matron parts : the king proceeds.

Now to dispose the dead, the care remains

To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains ;

Th' offending females to that task we doom,

To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475

These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,

And all the melancholy labour done)

eyes of Penelope with a spectacle of such horror as the dead bodies and blood of the suitors. It was indeed necessary to find some reasonable pretext for not introducing the queen immediately ; this might be expected from the fondness and affection of an husband towards a beloved wife, and therefore Ulysses makes even his fondness for her a reason why he delays his discovery, namely, his care not to grieve her with such a terrible scene of slaughter : besides, the death of the female servants is to succeed, and it would have been indecent to have made her assisting or present at their execution. The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct ; for by it he introduces the discovery to Penelope, in a time of leisure, and finds an opportunity to describe, at large, that surprizing and tender incident.

v. 477.—*the melancholy labour done,*

Drive to yon' court—]

It would, in these ages, observes Dacier, be thought barbarous in a king to command his son to perform an execution of so much horror : but antiently it was thought no dishonour : thus in the scriptures Gideon having taken Zeba and Salmana, two Midian kings, commands his son to kill them with the sword in his presence : but, continues that author, I wish Homer had deviated from that custom, that he had given both Ulysses and Telemachus sentiments of more humanity, and spared his reader a description of such a terrible execution. I am not delighted

Drive to yon' court, without the palace wall,
There the revenging sword shall smite them all;
So with the suitors let them mix in dust,
Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said: the lamentable train appear,
Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear;
Each heav'd her mournful burden, and beneath
The porch depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
The chief severe, compelling each to move,
Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.
With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
(The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor
Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore.

with any thing that has a tendency to inhumanity more than that lady; but it may be answered, that Homer was obliged to write according to the custom of the age. Virgil has ascribed an act more cruel to the pious Æneas, who sacrifices several unfortunate young men who were his captives, Æn. II. v. 15.

Then, pinion'd with their hands behind, appear
Th' unhappy captives, marching in the rear;
Appointed off'rings in the victor's name,
To sprinkle with their blood the funeral flame. Dryd.

This act is to be ascribed to the manner of the age, and the customs of war in the days of Æneas, and not to his inhumanity: but here it may seem essential to the very nature of epic poetry to relate this act of justice: the moral of it is, to see the good rewarded and the wicked punished, in the conclusion of the fable. These criminals had been as guilty in their several capacities as the suitors themselves; it was therefore necessary that their punishment should be set before the reader, as well as that of the suitors.

Once more the palace set in fair array, 491
 To the base court the females take their way;
 There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince. To these shall we afford 495
 A fate so pure, as by the martial sword?
 To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
 And base revilers of our house and name?

Thus speaking on the circling wall he strung
 A ship's tough cable, from a column hung; 500
 Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
 Whence no contending foot could reach the ground,
 Their heads above, connected in a row,
 They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below:
 Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
 The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
 Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
 The empty corse to waver with the wind.

v. 505. *Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare.*] Nothing can better represent to us the image of these sufferers than this similitude of a bird taken by the neck in a gin or snare. Hobbes in his version has omitted it; and Dacier has abridged the whole description.

Eustathius is pleasant upon the death of these wantons. What a certain person, says he, once spoke of a fig-tree, on which his clamorous wife had hanged herself, viz. "I wish all trees bore such fruit;" may be applied to those ropes. "It were to be wished that all nooses could catch such birds." This remark has escaped the notice of madam Dacier; because the race of clamorous women has been long extinct, and therefore there was no occasion to prescribe a remedy for a disease unknown to these happy ages.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
 Their bloody work: they lopp'd away the man, 510
 Morfel for dogs! then trimm'd with brazen sheers,
 The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears;
 His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel:
 He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell——

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way, 515
 So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address the king:
 Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
 To purge the palace: then the queen attend,
 And let her, with her matron-train, descend; 520
 The matron-train, with all the virgin-band,
 Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea; joyful I obey,
 But cast those mean dishonest rags away;
 Permit me first thy royal robes to bring: 525
 Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.
 "Bring sulphur strait and fire (the monarch cries)
 She hears, and at the word obedient flies.

v. 527. *Bring sulphur strait and fire——*] The reason why Ulysses orders sulphur to be brought, is, because every thing was thought to be polluted by a dead body, and he uses it by way of purification. The same opinion prevailed amongst the Hebrews as well as Greeks, as the scriptures inform us. Thus also in Job it is said, "Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation," xviii. 15. which is thought to allude to this custom. Livy mentions this practice amongst the Romans, lib. 30. c. 15. *Habet et in religionibus locum ad expiandas suffitu domus.*

Homer describes the female servants descending with

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,

He purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms. 530

Again the matron springs with eager pace,

And spreads her lord's return from place to place:

They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,

A gazing throng, a torch in ev'ry hand.

They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace 535

Each humbly kist his knee, or hand, or face ;

He knows them all ; in all such truth appears,

Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

torches ; this is done to shew the exact time of the action of this book, which is comprehended in the evening of the fortieth day.

Ulysses forbids Euryclea to bring a better garment: this little particularity is inserted with judgment; for the disguise of Ulysses in the garb of a beggar contributes to increase the incredulity of Penelope, and consequently to all those doubts and fears, and that struggle between the love of a husband and the dread of an impostor, which are the subject of the succeeding book.

THE

ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIII.

Prose

THE ARGUMENT.

Euryclia awakes Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,

The nurse, with eager rapture, speeds her way;

The transports of her faithful heart supply

A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

This book contains the discovery of Ulysses to Penelope. Monsieur Rapin is very severe upon some parts of it: whose objections I shall here recite.

The discovery of Ulysses to his queen was the most favourable occasion imaginable for the poet to give us some of the nicest touches of his art; but as he has managed it, it has nothing but faint and weak surprizes, cold and languishing astonishments, and very little of that delicacy and

And sleeps my child ? the rev'rend matron cries :
Ulysses lives ! arise, my child, arise !

exquisiteness which ought to express a conjugal tenderness : he leaves his wife too long in doubt and distrust, and she is too cautious and circumspect ; the formalities she observes in being fully assured, and her care to act with security, are set down in number and measure, lest she should fall into any mistake ; and this particularity makes the story dull, in a place that so much requires briskness and liveliness. Ought not the secret instinct of her love to have inspired her with other sentiments ? and should not her heart have told her, what her eyes could not ? Love is penetrating, and whispers more to us than the senses can convey ; but Homer understood not this philosophy : Virgil who makes Dido foresee that Æneas designs to leave her, would have made better advantage of this favourable opportunity.

The strength of this objection consists chiefly in the long incredulity of Penelope, and the slowness she uses to make an undeniable discovery : this Rapin judges to be contrary to the passion of love, and consequently that the poet writes unnaturally.

There is somewhat of the Frenchman in this criticism : Homer, in his opinion, wants vivacity ; and if Rapin had been to have drawn Ulysses, we had seen him all transport and extasy. But where there is most fancy, there is often the least judgment. Penelope thought Ulysses to be dead ; he had been absent twenty years : and through absence and his present disguise, he was another person from that Ulysses whom she knew, when he sailed to Troy ; so that he was become an absolute stranger. From this observation we may appeal to the reader's judgment, if Penelope, without full conviction, ought to be persuaded that this person was the real Ulysses ? And how could she be convinced, but by asking many questions, and descending to particularities, which must necessarily occasion delay in the discovery ? If indeed Ulysses and Penelope had met

At length appears the long-expected hour !
 Ulysses comes ! The suitors are no more !

after a shorter absence, when one view would have assured her that he was her real husband, then too much transport could not have been expressed by the poet : but this is not the case, she is first to know her husband, before she could or ought to express her fondness for his return, otherwise she might be in danger of misplacing it upon an impostor : but she is no sooner convinced that Ulysses is actually returned, but she receives him with as much fondness as can be expressed, or as Rapin could require.

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away :
 At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew.

Till this moment the discovery was not evidently made, and her passion would have been unseasonable ; but this is no sooner done, but she falls into an agony of affection. If she had here appeared cool and indifferent, there had been weight in Rapin's objections. Besides, Aristotle informs us, there was a play, called, *The false Ulysses* : it was formed upon a story of a person who designed to surprize Penelope, and told her, that he was her husband ; and to confirm it, pretended to remember a bow, which he used before he went to the siege of Troy. This shews that Penelope had been in danger from impostors, and it is therefore very prudent in her to be upon the guard, and not to yield without full conviction.

But there is a dispute of a different nature mentioned by monsieur Bayle ; namely, whether if Penelope had yielded to an impostor, believing him to be really Ulysses, she had been guilty of adultery ? Monsieur Bafnage thus argues : ' Let us suppose a wife transported with love for an husband, running eagerly to the person she mistakes for him : this woman has no design to be deceived, one

No more they view the golden light of day ;
 Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey !

cannot blame her ardour ; it is lawful, if he proves her real husband : in short, her ignorance is involuntary, and occasioned solely by a laudable passion for her husband : yet, if this person prove an adulterer, is the wife entirely excusable? ought her eagerness and precipitation to give her no uneasiness? undoubtedly it ought, because she is supposed to act precipitately, without a full examination : her passion is stronger than her reason, and therefore she is blameable.' The author of the general critique on Maimbourg is more indulgent : he judges that if a woman does not refuse a strict examination out of a blameable motive, she is excusable, though she happens to oblige an impostor. ' If a wife, deceived by the resemblance between her husband and an impostor, shall allow the latter all the privileges of the marriage-bed, this action is no stain to her chastity; and the husband would be the most unreasonable creature breathing, should he blame it as a breach of conjugal fidelity, provided she is no way accessory to the imposition.' So that, according to this author, tho' the wife is betrayed by her precipitation, yet she is to be accounted innocent ; because the precipitation is occasioned by a vehemence of love for her husband. But I fear few husbands who should take their wives in such circumstances would excuse them, or believe that they had used due circumspection. In short, monsieur Bayle rightly decides the question, by saying, that every person who acts precipitately, is culpable ; and that no person can act rationally, without a full and satisfactory examination. And indeed, if this rule were observed there would scarce be any room for the aforesaid supposition. The resemblance between man and man is never so perfect, but the difference upon a strict observation is discernible : we may therefore conclude, that a wife who should suffer such a deceit, was not very unwilling to be deceived ; especially when there must be between a man and his wife a thousand

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
 Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
 The righteous Pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
 The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,

particularities, which could be only known to the wife and husband, which, upon a due scrutiny, would discover the imposture.

I fear I shall be tedious to the reader, by mentioning another difficulty, of a similar nature, started by Seneca. 'If any person should make an assignation with his own wife in disguise, supposing her to be the wife of another person, would he be guilty of adultery?' He answers in the affirmative; though the wife herself would be innocent; for he is guilty intentionally. This may be illustrated by the example of Jacob, who was blameless when he was deceived by Leah, who personated his wife Rachel; but Leah was culpable, though Jacob was innocent, for she very well knew that she was not wife to Jacob. But this is the province of a casuist, not of a commentator.

v. 6. *Ulysses lives!—Ulysses comes!*] In the Greek it is literally, *Ulysses is come, he is at length come to his palace.* This last circumstance is not a tautology; observes Eustathius, a person may be returned to his country, and yet never arrive at his family: thus Agamemnon reached his dominions in safety, but was assassinated before he came to his palace. We may observe in general, that Euryclea and Penelope, through their whole conference, speak with brevity; Homer was too good a judge of human nature, to represent them speaking with prolixity. Passion is always in haste, and delivers itself with precipitation; and this is very well painted in this interview: Euryclea is in a transport of joy for the return of Ulysses, and Penelope has all her affections awakened at the news of it.

And human thought, with unresisted sway,
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away :

Truth by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And folly, with the tongue of wisdom speaks.

Unkind, the fond illusion to impose !

Was it to flatter, or deride my woes ?

Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,

Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy :

Why must I wake to grieve, and curse thy shore ?

O Troy—may never tongue pronounce thee more ?

v. 13. *The righteous Pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten, and confound the wise.*]

This is an admirable sentiment: it is consonant to many expressions in the holy scriptures. God is the Lord of spirits, and gives and takes away as seems best to his infinite wisdom. The thoughts of man, as well as his life, are equally in the power of the Almighty.

v. 21. *Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy, etc.*] Homer, observes Eustathius, very judiciously mentions this profound sleep of Penelope; for it might have been thought improbable, that she should not wake at the noise and confusion of the battle. It was solely to reconcile it to credibility, that in a preceding book, Pallas was introduced to throw her into it: besides, the womens apartment was always in the upper part of the house, and was from thence called *ὑπερῶν*: and consequently Penelope was at a sufficient distance from the place of the combat, and may be easily supposed not to be waked by it.

The circumstance of Penelope's not being awaked by the cries of the suitors, furnishes us with a reason why they are not heard by the Ithacans that lived near the palace: for if she who is within the palace is not disturbed by the noise, it is credible enough, that the Greeks, who lived at some distance from the palace, should not hear it.

Be gone : another might have felt our rage, 25

But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth : My soul a lie disdains ;

Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns :

That stranger, patient of the suitors wrongs,

And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30

He, he is thine ! thy son, his latent guest

Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast ;

With well-concerted art to end his woes,

And burst at once in vengeance of the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung

Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung ; 36

v. 35.—*The queen in transport sprung*

Swift from the couch—]

We are not to gather from this transport of Penelope, that she is fully convinced of the return of Ulysses : she is yet incredulous ; but she must have been insensible if she had continued unmoved at the mention of the arrival of an husband, whose return has been described through the whole *Odyssey* as the chief object of all her desires. Besides, she receives the death of the suitors with joy ; she cannot disbelieve the testimony of Euryclea concerning their deaths ; but thinking it impossible that they should be slain by any one person, she ascribes their destruction not to Ulysses, but a deity. But then is not such a supposition extravagant ? and can it be reconciled to probability, that a god should really be supposed to descend to work their destruction ? It may be answered, that the excess of the assertion ought to be ascribed to the excess of joy in the speaker : Penelope is in a transport, and no wonder if she speaks with amplification : she judges it impossible that such a great event should be wrought by a mortal hand ; and it is therefore very natural, while she is un-

Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,

Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?

How could that numerous and outrageous band

By one be slain, though by an hero's hand?

46

I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,

When death was busy, a loud dying groan;

The damsel train turn'd pale at every wound,

Immur'd we fate, and catch'd each passing sound;

When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends,

47

And at his nod the damsel train descends;

There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,

And the dead suitors almost swam in blood;

Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,

Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey,

50

der a surprize, and her thoughts raised above the bounds of calm reason, to ascribe it to a deity.

It has been believed, that all the notions of good and bad dæmons that prevailed among the ancients were borrowed from truth, and that they received them by tradition from the offices of good and bad angels: if I might be allowed to make this supposition, then what Penelope here speaks may be reconciled to strict verity; then we may find a reason why she may, without extravagance, ascribe the suitors deaths to a dæmon, or deity. Thus, 2 Kings, cap. xix. v. 35. *That night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand.* If this supposition be thought disallowable, the former will be a sufficient vindication. I will only add, that the poet artfully turns the incredulity of Penelope to the praise of Ulysses; the exploit was so great, that no mortal was brave enough to perform it; it must therefore be wrought by a god: but this god is at length discovered to be Ulysses.

Glorious in gore !——now with sulphureous fires,
 The dome he purges, now the flame aspires ;
 Heap'd lie the dead without the palace walls,——
 Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls !
 Thy every wish the bounteous gods bestow, 55
 Enjoy the present good, and former woe ;
 Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see ;
 He lives to thy Telemachus and thee !

Ah no ! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
 Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind ; 60
 How blest this happy hour, should he appear,
 Dear to us all, to me supremely dear !
 Ah no ! some god the suitors deaths decreed,
 Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed,
 Blind to condemn the stranger's righteous cause, 65
 And violate all hospitable laws !
 The good they hated, and the Pow'rs defy'd ;
 But heav'n is just, and by a god they dy'd.
 For never must Ulysses view this shore ;
 Never ! the lov'd Ulysses is no more ! 70

What words, the matron cries, have reach'd my ears ?
 Doubt we his presence, when he now appears ?
 Then hear conviction : ere the fatal day
 That forc'd Ulysses o'er the watry way,
 A boar fierce-rushing in the sylvan war 75
 Plough'd half his thigh ; I saw, I saw the scar,
 And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound ;
 But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
 Then, daughter, haste away ! and if a lie
 Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die ! 80

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies,
 Wife is thy soul, but errors seize the wife;
 The works of gods what mortal can survey,
 Who knows their motives, who shall trace their way!
 But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
 The paths of death, by man or by a god.

v. 83. *The works of gods what mortal can survey?*]
 This assertion is made with great judgment. Euryclea had given almost a demonstrative proof that she was not mistaken in the person of Ulysses: she had instanced in the scar which he received by a boar on mount Parnassus; and this seemed to be an undeniable evidence of her veracity: what method then could the poet take to carry on Penelope's incredulity, and give her room to resist such evidence with any appearance of reason? This is very well explained by Eustathius. Penelope, observes that author, answers with profound wisdom; her words are short, but contain excellent truth and morality; this is her meaning:
 ' Euryclea, you appeal to your senses for the truth of
 ' your affirmation: you saw the wound, and touched it as
 ' you bathed him; and he forbade you to make a discovery
 ' of his person: from hence you conclude, that it is Ulysses who has slain the suitors: not remembering that the
 ' gods are able thus to shew themselves to man, and assume at their pleasure such disguises: how then do you
 ' know but this is a god? Are you able to know the
 ' ways of a deity?' To this Euryclea makes no reply; from whence we may gather, that it was believed to be an undeniable truth, that the divine beings sometimes assumed the shape of man, and appeared visibly upon earth. Such expressions as these might almost persuade us of the reality of a former conjecture, that these notions were borrowed from a tradition of the appearances of angels; they being so consonant to the testimony of the holy scriptures, and so agreeable to the manifestations of those celestial beings.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends;
But with alternate joy and fear descends;
At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love!
Then gliding through the marble valves in state,
Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat,
The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;

v. 89. *At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove!
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love.*]

Penelope apprehends, that the person mentioned by Euryyclea is not Ulysses; yet her apprehensions are not so strong as to exclude all hopes that he is her husband; in this state of uncertainty she descends, doubtful whether to meet him as such, or first to prove him whither he be the real Ulysses; and this explains her conduct in this place: if he evidently were Ulysses, she ought to receive him with transport; but if he be not Ulysses, then all such advances would be acts of immodesty, and a reproach to her prudence. Ladies are best judges of what is decent amongst ladies, and madam Dacier affirms, that the point of decency is well maintained by Homer through this whole interview; and that antiquity can shew nothing wherein a severity of manners is better observed. And indeed it must be allowed, that in this respect Penelope proceeds with no more than a necessary caution; it would have been very absurd to have described her flying to the embraces of a stranger, merely upon the testimony of Euryyclea, without waiting for a personal and ocular demonstration.

v. 93. *The monarch, by a column high enthron'd.*]
The circumstance of persons of figure being placed by a column occurs frequently in the Odyssey, it may therefore be necessary to explain it: it is mentioned twice in the eighth book, *προς κίονα μέγαν ἑστίας*, but being there

Curious to hear his queen the silence-break :

95

Amaz'd she fate, and impotent to speak ;

applied to Demodocus. who was blind it may be thought to mean only that he leaned against the pillar by reason of his blindness : but this is not the full import of the words, they denote dignity ; and a seat erected near the column was a seat of distinction. Thus 2 Kings xi. 14. *Behold the king stood by a pillar, ἐπὶ τῷ σῦλῳ, as the manner was, and the princes, etc. by the king.* Thus we see the royal station was by some remarkable pillar ; Josephus expresses it by ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς, which probably is a corruption ; it ought to be ἐπὶ τῆς στήλης, *juxta columnam* : thus again, 2 Kings xxiii. 3. *And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant, etc.* So that by this expression of Ulysses being seated by a column, we are to understand that he received Penelope as a king ; he took the royal seat, to convince her that he was the real Ulysses

v. 94. — *withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground ;**Curious to hear his queen the silence break.]*

We have all along been vindicating the conduct of Penelope, for not immediately acknowledging Ulysses. Her ignorance of his person is her vindication ; but how then is Ulysses to be justified, who is in no doubt about Penelope ? Why does he not fly with transport to the wife of his affection ? The reason is very evident : he very well knows that Penelope is uncertain about his person ; he therefore forbears to offer violence to her modesty by any caresses, while she is in this state of uncertainty, and which decency requires her to refuse, till she is assured that the person who offers them is Ulysses.

Homer tells us, that Ulysses turned his eyes toward the ground. Eustathius imagines, that he does it that Penelope may not immediately discover him ; but perhaps the poet intended no more than to draw Ulysses here, as he drew him in the Iliad, lib. 3. and describe him according to his usual behaviour.

O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
 Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
 At length Telemachus ——— Oh who can find
 A woman like Penelope unkind ! 100
 Why thus in silence ? why with winning charms
 Thus slow to fly with rapture to his arms ?
 Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
 When twice ten years are past of mighty woes :
 To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
 The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone !

————— *In thought profound,*
His modest eyes he fix'd upon the ground.
 Thus also he is represented by Ovid, *Metam. lib. 13.*

Astitit atque oculos paulum tellure moratos
Sustulit —————

Then from his seat arose Laertes' son,
Look'd down a while, and paus'd ere he begun. Dryd.

v. 96. *Amaz'd she fate, and impotent to speak.*] The reader will certainly be curious to know how Penelope accosts Ulysses in this first interview, and the poet manages it with excellent judgment : she must be supposed to be under a great surprize and confusion of thought, this surprize takes away her speech ; she is tost between hopes and fears, and consequently it is very natural, before she speaks, to examine him with her eyes.

v. 106. *The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone.*] It has been objected, that Telemachus here makes too free a remonstrance to Penelope ; and that he is wanting in reverence towards his mother. Eustathius answers, that he speaks no more than Ulysses says himself, in the process of the story, and consequently he is no more blameable. But the case is not the same, there is a difference between a son and a husband, and what is decent in the

O my Telemachus ! the queen rejoin'd,
 Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind;
 Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
 Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise. 110
 O deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
 These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove !

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies,
 Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wife;
 Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring; 115
 This garb of poverty belies the king;

mouth of the latter would be irreverent in the former. Spondanus is of opinion, that he offends against decency, *juveniliter nimis insultavit*; and Ulysses seems to repress his ardor.

*Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wife—
 No more——*

Dacier answers, that Telemachus being fully assured that it is the real Ulysses, seems shocked at the indifference of Penelope. And indeed the warmth of the expression is to be imputed to the emotion of the speaker; so that we are not to look upon it as an outrage of decency toward Penelope, but a warm expostulation occasioned by his zeal for Ulysses.

V. 116. *This garb of poverty belies the king.* } This expression furnishes another cause for the incredulity of Penelope; Ulysses imputes it to his disguise, and is far from resenting it as a want of conjugal affection. I must confess, that here may seem to be an unseasonable transition: Homer brings Ulysses and Penelope together, raises our expectations to see a warm and tender description at the discovery of the husband to the wife, and all of a sudden he starts from the subject, and leaves us under an uncertainty equal to that of Penelope. The scene closes

No more.—This day our deepest care requires,

Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.

If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,

The homicide retreats to foreign lands;

120

too abruptly, and Homer acts like one who invites his guests to an entertainment, and when they were sat down with an eager appetite, takes away their dinner. But then it may be answered, that the occasion presses: Ulysses finds it necessary to provide for his own safety, before the people of Ithaca are informed of the slaughter of the suitors; this is the dictate of good sense; he first acts the wise man, by guarding against an imminent danger; and then shews the tender husband, by his affection to Penelope: and this is the reason why he adjourns the discovery. Besides, this interval, which is very short, gives time to Penelope to recollect her spirits from surprize, and makes her mistress of her own thoughts. In that view the reader is to look upon this break, like a pause between the acts in a tragedy, and as an artful interruption to introduce the unravelling more naturally, and with greater probability.

v. 119. *If one man's blood* ———] Ulysses here argues very conclusively: if the person who has shed one man's blood only, and that man of inferior station; if he is yet obliged to fly into banishment, lest he should be slain by any of the dead person's relations or friends; what have they to fear, who have not only slain one man, but above an hundred, and these not plebians, but princes? They must necessarily have many avengers, who will be ready to pursue our lives.

But it may be objected, that Ulysses is a king, and therefore above apprehensions of punishment. It is true, Ulysses is a king, yet subject to the laws: his government was not so despotic, as to have no reason to fear the resentments of the chief families of his subjects, whose heirs was slain by his hand. I cannot entirely agree with

By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls,
Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
The world conspires to speak Ulysses wife ;
For wisdom all is thine ! lo I obey, 125
And dauntless follow where you lead the way ;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath, the monarch cries,
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay ;
While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sing,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.

Dacier in this last sentiment : Ulysses had only done an act of justice upon these offenders, and had transgressed no law by it, and ought therefore to apprehend no vengeance from the law. I should rather ascribe the apprehensions of Ulysses, to a fear of a sudden assault from the friends of the suitors before he could discover himself to be the real Ulysses. He is afraid of an assassination, not a legal punishment ; the rage of the people, not the justice of the law.

v. 122. *Th' important deed our whole attention calls.* Ulysses to prove Telemachus, and to form a judgment of his wisdom, asks his advice upon the present emergence ; but the poet, in his answer, observes a due decency : Telemachus pays a laudable deference to the superior wisdom of Ulysses, and modestly submits to his judgment. What we are to gather from this conduct is, that no person should be so self-confiding in his own judgment, as to despise that of other men, though those men are inferior in wisdom.

That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135

Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!

The suitors death unknown, till we remove

Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

v. 135. *That hence th' eluded passengers may say,*

Lo! the queen weds———]

This is an instance of the art of Ulysses, essential to his character, and maintained through the whole *Odyssey*. Eustathius excellently explains the reason of this conduct: the suitors had been accustomed to retire from the palace, and sleep in other places by night: it would therefore have alarmed the whole city, and made them apprehensive that some calamity had befallen them, if there had not appeared a seeming reason why they returned not to their several houses as usual; Ulysses therefore invents this stratagem to deceive them into an opinion that they stayed to celebrate the queen's nuptials. But there appears to be a strong objection against this part of the relation: we have already seen the suitors slain, without being heard by the Ithacans of the city; is it then probable that the sound of the music should be heard abroad, when the cries, shouts, and groans, during the fight, were not heard out of the palace? Was the music louder than these united noises? It is not easy to solve this difficulty, unless we are allowed to imagine that the more than usual stay of the suitors in the palace had raised the curiosity of the Ithacans to enquire the reason of it; who consequently, approaching the palace, might hear the music and dancing, and conclude that it was occasioned by the queen's marriage. Besides, in the stillness of the night, a lower sound may be farther heard, than one more loud, during the noise and hurry of the day: it being evident from the preceding book, that the fight was by day.

v. 137. *—Till we remove*

Far from the court———]

It may be asked, what occasions this recess of Ulysses?

Thus spoke the king: Th' observant train obey,
 At once they bathe, and dress in proud array; 140
 The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
 And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
 The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
 Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;
 Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say 145
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.
 Thus they——but nobly chaste she weds no more.
 Mean-while the weary'd king the bath ascends;
 With faithful cares Eurynome attends, 150
 O'er ev'ry limb a show'r of fragrance sheds:
 Then dress'd in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The warrior-goddess gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
 His thick large locks, of Hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
 His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mold,
 And the pale silver glows with fusile gold:

will he be better able to resist his enemies in the country
 than in the city? The answer is, he withdraws that he
 may avoid the first resentments of the Ithacans, upon the
 discovery of the death of the suitors: besides, it is by this
 method in his power to conceal his person, till the violence
 of the people is settled; or raise a party to resist their ef-
 forts: at the worst he is certain to secure his flight, if his
 affairs should be reduced to extremities.

So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a god he moves;
 More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
 Radiant before his gazing consort fate.
 And oh, my queen! he cries; what pow'r above 165
 Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love!
 Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
 Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
 Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
 Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day? 170
 Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
 For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed:

v. 171. ——— *Dispatchful spread*
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed.]

These words have given occasion of censure from monsieur de la Mothe de Vayer: according to whom the precaution of Penelope is not much to be admired; "Ulysses made himself suspicious by expressing so much eagerness to go to bed with Penelope; she was so far from having time enough to know him, that she had scarce spoke three words to him, but he bluntly commands Euryclea to get the bed ready for them." So that, according to this author, Penelope mistrusts his impatience; she imagines the reason why he is so hasty, is, because he fears that a longer time would discover his imposture, and frustrate his desires. And, indeed, if Ulysses had given such a command, the objection had not been without a foundation. But la Mothe is deceived: Ulysses does not ask a bed for himself and Penelope, but for *himself alone*, because his wife vouchsafed not to come near him, and used him with a seeming cruelty.

Ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι μάλιστα σῶσον λόγος ὄφρα καὶ αὐτὴς
 Λιξέμαι

My weary nature craves the balm of rest :

But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah no ! she cries, a tender heart I bear,

175

A foe to pride ; no adamant is there ;

And now, ev'n now it melts ! for sure I see

Once more Ulysses, my belov'd, in thee !

Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,

His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy !

180

Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,

Fram'd by his hand, and be it drest in state !

which is literally enough rendered in the translation.

*Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed.*

v. 175. *Oh no ! she cries, a tender heart I bear,*

A foe to pride ; no adamant is there.]

It is not easy to translate this passage literally.

— οὐτ' ἄρ' ἐμὲ μεγαλίζομαι, οὐδ' ἀδριζῶ,
οὐδὲ λήν ἄγαμαι.

Eustathius explains μεγαλίζομαι, to signify, *I am not of a proud heart* ; ἀδριζῶ, *I despise not your poverty* ; ἄγαμαι, *I am no longer under an astonishment* ; or, ἕδε λήν ἐκπλήττομαι, *I cease to be surprized at what I see and hear*. Thus Penelope speaks negatively, and the meaning of her words are, that she is not influenced by pride and cruelty, to persist in her incredulity, but by a laudable care and caution. Eustathius proposes Penelope as a pattern to all women upon the like occasion ; her own eyes persuade her that the person with whom she confers is Ulysses : Euryclea acknowledges her master ; Telemachus his father ; yet she dares not immediately credit her own eyes, Euryclea, or Telemachus : and the same author concludes with a pretty observation, that Ulysses found it

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious with disguise ;
 Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies,

easier to subdue above an hundred enemies than the diffidence and incredulity of Penelope.

v. 183. *Thus speaks the queen, still dubious—*] It must be allowed that this is a very artful turn of thought in Penelope. Ulysses commands a bed to be prepared, Penelope catches the word, and seeming to consent, orders Euryclea to carry the bed out of the bridal apartment, and prepare it. Now, this bed was of such a nature, as to be inwrought into the substance of the apartment itself, and could not be removed : if, therefore, Ulysses had acquiesced in the injunction given by Penelope, and not discovered the impossibility of it, she might very justly have concluded him an impostor, being manifestly ignorant of the secret of his own marriage-bed.

But Eustathius starts an objection against this whole process of the discovery, which he calls insoluble ; and indeed if Homer fails in the unravelling of his poem, he is to be severely blamed: Tully is of this opinion, *Illic enim debet toto animo a poeta in dissolutionem nodi agi ; eaque precipua fabulae pars est, quae requirit diligentiam.* The difficulty raised by Eustathius is as follows : Penelope imagines, that the person who pretends to be her husband is not really Ulysses, but a god, who not only assumes his form, but, to favour the imposture, the resemblance of the wound received from the boar : now, if he be a god, how is it possible she should conceive him to be ignorant of the secret of the marriage-bed ? and consequently, how can she be convinced of the reality of Ulysses from his knowledge of it, when it must necessarily be known to a god, as well as to the real Ulysses ? all that she ought to gather from it is, that the person with whom she speaks is Ulysses, or a god. Eustathius replies, that Penelope, upon the discovery of the secret, makes no scruple to yield ; because whether it be Ulysses, or a god, her case is happy ; if he prove to be Ulysses, she has her wishes ; if a god, it is no

Alas for this ! what mortal strength can move 185
Th' enormous burden ; who but heav'n above ?

small piece of good fortune. Dacier condemns this solution, and tells us, that Penelope was so faithful to her husband, that she would not have received even a god into the place of Ulysses : the true answer, continues that author, is to be drawn from the pagan theology, according to which the inferior deities were supposed to have a finite knowledge, and consequently Penelope might think the discovery of the nature of the nuptial-bed a full conviction of the reality of Ulysses, it being so great a secret that even a god might be ignorant of it. But this is all fancy ; for allowing this person to be a god, why might not Penelope imagine him to be a deity of the superior order, and for that reason well acquainted with the secrets of this nuptial bower ? especially because Jupiter himself was notorious for such amorous illusions. Dacier herself confesses this to be no just solution, but gives a very different reason : how is it possible, says she, that this bed and whole apartment should be built by the single hand of Ulysses, without being seen by any person while he builds it ? or how can any one be assured, that a secret that is known to a third person (Actoris) is not through weakness or interest discovered to others ? It is true, the manner of the discovery entirely depends upon the choice of the poet, but I could wish that he had chosen a method more probable than this of the nuptial bed, which, in my judgment, continues the same author, is unworthy of the *Odyssey*. I am persuaded that this is one of the places where, as Horace writes, Homer nods.

I will lay together what occurs to me by way of reply. The first objection is, that Penelope imagines Ulysses to be a god, and consequently his knowledge of the nuptial bed ought not to have induced her to believe him to be the real Ulysses : the answer is, Penelope thought him a god only during her first transport ; it is to be imputed to her surprize, that she at all thinks him a deity : this is very

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;
But the whole earth must move, if heav'n commands.

evident, for from the moment she saw him, the thought of his divinity vanishes, and she never mentions one word concerning such a supposition, nay, from the first glance she almost believes him to be the real Ulysses.

*O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.*

She is so far from thinking him a deity, that she is almost persuaded that he is her husband. If this be allowed, the first difficulty ceases : for granting her belief that the person before her is a real man, and no man but Ulysses was acquainted with the nuptial bed ; it follows, that this man is the real Ulysses, and that this incident is not ill chosen by the poet, in the discovery of Ulysses.

Dacier objects, that this apartment could not possibly be erected without being known to other persons ; but we have seen Ulysses build a ship in a solitary island, without the assistance of any man, in the fifth Odyssey ; and why may he not then be allowed to do the same, with respect to this nuptial bower ? All kind of arts in mechanics were antiently practised by the greatest personages, and their knowledge and dexterity in them was esteemed a glory. This consideration may perhaps reconcile the reader to this part of the discovery.

The only difficulty that now remains is this : Actoris, a female servant, is allowed to be in the secret : how then can Penelope be assured that she has not betrayed it ? Homer himself obviates this objection ; he has, in a very solemn manner, told us, that only twelve of all the female train were guilty of a breach of trust, and therefore Penelope may safely rely upon the fidelity of Actoris. Besides, it adds no small weight to this vindication of Homer, to observe, that the whole procedure of the discovery is accidental ; how could Ulysses fore-know that the proof of

Then hear sure evidence, while we display
 Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190
 This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread
 Full in the court its ever-verdant head.
 Vast as some mighty column's bulk on high
 The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;

his veracity would depend upon his knowledge of the bridal bower ? and consequently it is not to be imagined that he should have made any clandestine enquires about it : it may be added, that Ulysses has been no more than five days upon the Ithacan shores, and probably had never seen Astoris, who alone was acquainted with the nature of this bed : no person was antiently permitted to enter the womens apartment, but fathers, husbands, or brothers ; this therefore was the greatest secret in all families ; this secret Penelope proposes in the trial of Ulysses, and upon his knowledge of it receives him as her husband. To instance almost in a parallel case ; Orestes in Euripides tells Iphigenia, that the lance which Pelops used in the combat against Enomaus was lodged in her apartment ; this circumstance convinces her that the person who knew this secret must be her brother Orestes, no persons of a more distant relation being admitted into such privacies.

v. 193. *Vast as some mighty column's bulk on high
 The huge trunk rose——*]

I will not promise that the reader will be pleased with this description of the nuptial bowers : the Greek is noble, and the words sounding and harmonious ; an happiness that is wanting in our language. In this, and the like cases, the translator must say, with Lucretius upon a like occasion,

——*Graiorum obscura reperta
 Difficile illustrare Latinis versibus esse,
 Propter egestatem linguæ, et rerum novitatem.*

Besides, it must be allowed, that the relation itself is very

Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r 195
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r;
 The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins;
 And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.

wonderful; for it is not easy to conceive that the bole of an olive-tree should be so large as to contain, upon the dimensions of it, a whole bed-sted. I would willingly imagine, that it is only a supporter of it. It is likewise somewhat extroradinary, that this olive-tree is not felled, or cut up from the roots; for Eustathius informs us, that *περὶ δὲ μὴν* signifies *to cut asunder at some distance from the earth*; so that a great part of the trunk is left standing, upon which Ulysses builds his bridal bed. What occurs to me upon this incident is, that Homer must be imagined to write according to the customs of the age in which he lived, unless we can suppose he unnecessarily invented an absurdity: I therefore doubt not but there were antiently such beds as this of Ulysses. Besides, the more wonderful this is, the better it serves for the purpose of Homer, in convincing us that the person who was acquainted with a matter so uncommon must be the real Ulysses, and not an impostor; it is for this purpose that the poet describes the bower built round the olive-tree, before the framing of the bed is at all mentioned.

*Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r,
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r:
 Then lopp'd the branchy bead: aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain.*

This, I say, is particularly described by Homer, to convince us that the place where the bed stood was entirely secret; it being closed up from observation before this particular apartment was undertaken, and therefore the knowledge of it was a strong argument that the person who was acquainted with it must be the real Ulysses.

I lopp'd the branchy head; aloft in twain
Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain; 200

Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,

And bore it, regular from space to space;

Athwart the frame at equal distance lye

Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye;

Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mold 205

With silver shone, with elephant, and gold.

But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,

Or still inviolate the olive stands,

'Tis thine, oh queen, to say: and now impart,

If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart? 210

While yet he speaks, her pow'rs of life decay,

She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away:

At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,

And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew;

The tears pour'd down amain: and oh, she cries, 215

Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise!

O vers'd in every turn of human art,

Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart!

The righteous Pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,

Decree us to sustain a length of woes, 220

And from the flow'r of life, the bliss deny

To bloom together, fade away, and dye.

O let me, let me not thine anger move,

That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love;

Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms, 225

Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms!

I dreaded fraud! men, faithless men, betray

Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey:

Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, oh my lord ! not want of love: 230
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,

v. 231. *Like me had Helen fear'd*————] This passage occasioned great disputes amongst the antient critics ; some contended for the common punctuation ; others thus read it,

Εἰ ἤδη, ———

Then the meaning of the passage is thus to be understood. Helen would not have yielded to a stranger, if she had known that stranger, εἰ ἤδη ἀνδρὰ is to be understood according to this interpretation. The same critics thus construe the following words,

Ο μιν αὖτις ἀγῆτοι νῆες Ἀχαιῶν, etc.

O is the same with δι' οὗ, *propter hanc causam*, and the whole passage is thus to be translated, *If Helen had known the stranger, she would not have yielded to him; therefore the Greeks rose in arms to free her from the impostor.* They defend this application by having recourse to a tradition, that Paris could never have obtained the consent of Helen if Venus had not given him the resemblance of Menelaus, in whose form he prevailed upon that fatal beauty ; otherways the instance is no way parallel ; for if Helen was not deceived, how can her example be brought to induce Penelope to act with caution, lest she take an impostor to her bed instead of an husband ? I confess this construction of the Greek appears to me very obscure ; contrary to the stile of Homer, which is always clear and natural. Besides, it contradicts the whole story of Helen through the Iliad and Odyssey, and she herself no where alledges this deceit as her excuse, but frequently condemns her own conduct in forsaking the bed of Menelaus. But granting that she was thus deceived originally, the deceit

Ere Greece rose dreadful in the avenging day,
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed :
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
 But why these sorrows, when my lord arrives ?
 I yield, I yield I my own Ulysses lives ! 240
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bow'r.)
 Since what no eye has seen, thy tongue reveal'd, 245
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.

Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
 As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores,
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars, 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulph'd in crouds at once the sailors die,
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves,

must necessarily soon appear, and yet she voluntarily co-
 habits many years with Paris. The other interpretation
 may therefore perhaps be preferable ; namely, if Helen
 had considered what evils might ensue from her injury to
 Menelaus, she would have acted more wisely : this Pene-
 lope introduces to vindicate her conduct in acting with so
 much caution ; she opposes her wariness to the inconfide-
 rateness of Helen, and ascribes all the calamities of Greece
 to it.

All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand, 255

And plunging forth with transport grasps the land.

The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,

Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.

Nor had they ended till the morning ray :

But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260

The wheels of night retarding, to detain

The gay Aurora in the wavy main :

v. 260. *But Pallas backward held the rising day.*]

We are not to look upon this merely as a poetical ornament, there is no necessity for it. The battle between the suitors and Ulysses happened in the evening ; since then we have seen the palace purified, the dead suitors carried away, and the female servants punished ; Euryclea has held a long conference with Penelope, there has been singing and dancing in the palace, and an interview at large described between Ulysses and Penelope ! then the poet proceeds to recapitulate the story of the whole Odyssey : now, all these incidents could not be comprehended in the compass of one night : Homer, therefore, to reconcile it to probability, introduces Minerva to protract it, and make the time proportionable to the incidents. But, perhaps, it may be thought a violent machine, and contrary to the established laws of nature, to suppose the course of the night alterable : the answer is, poets are allowed to write according to common fame, and what Homer here relates could not shock the ears of the ancients, who had before heard of the like story at the conception of Hercules. I will only observe, that Homer gives no more than two horses to Aurora's chariot, Lampus and Phaeton ; whereas the chariot of the sun is described with four : Thus Ovid,

*Interea volucres Pyroeis, Eous, et Æthon,
Solis equi, quartusque Phlegon.*

Whose flaming steeds, emerging through the night,
Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265

Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;

A labour long, and hard remains behind ;

By heav'n above, by hell beneath enjoin'd :

For, to Tiresias through th' eternal gates

Of hell I trode, to learn my future fates. 270

But end we here—the night demands repose,

Be deck'd the couch ! and peace a-while my woes !

To whom the queen. Thy word we shall obey,

And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away !

Since the just gods who tread the starry plains 275

Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.

But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart ;

Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

v. 278. *Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.*] Ulysses had said, in the sentence immediately preceding,

A labour long, and hard, remains.

This could not fail of alarming Penelope, and raising all her curiosity to know it. Homer would greatly have offended against nature, if he had not described her under an impatience upon the mention of it : her fondness is too sincere to be indifferent upon such a suggestion, but her answer to Ulysses chiefly demands observation.

If heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows,

Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

This discovers a greatness of spirit worthy of a queen and heroine : she is threatened to lose Ulysses by a second ab-

To this the king. Ah why must I disclose
A dreadful story of approaching woes ? 280

Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
When thou must learn what I must speak with tears ?
Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,
Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
From realm to realm a nation to explore 285

Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
A painted wonder, flying on the main,
An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
The unknown instrument with strange surprize, 290

And calls a corn-van : this upon the plain
I fix, and hail the monarch of the main :
Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar :
Then swift re-sailing to my native shores, 295
Due victims slay to all th' æthereal pow'rs.

sence, she is alarmed with a new train of sufferings ; but being informed that all these calamities will end in a prosperous issue, that long life and happiness attend him, she not only takes courage personally, but comforts her husband. Homer was too good a judge of decency to ascribe the weakness that attends the generality of that sex to Penelope ; she has a bravery of soul worthy of a heroine in epic poetry. Besides, this is a further instance of Homer's judgment : the event of the *Odyssey* is to shew Ulysses happy ; now, if the poet had not fully satisfied the reader in this respect, he had not reinstated his hero in prosperity, and consequently had defeated the moral of the *Odyssey*, which is to shew wisdom and virtue triumphant, by representing his hero after all difficulties settled in full tranquillity.

Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays ;
 Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ; 306
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest ;
 My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous Pow'rs display,
 By their dread Seer *, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul : If ripe for death, 305
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath :
 While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows,
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

But Euryclea, with dispatchful care,
 And sage Eurynome, the couch prepare : 310
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day ;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynome descends ;
 A torch she bares to light with guiding fires 315
 The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed,

* Tiresias.

v. 317. ——— *His fair spouse Ulysses led*

To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.]

The reader may be pleased to consult the annotations on book XI. v. 152. concerning the answer of Ulysses to Penelope ; it being a repetition from that part of the Odyssey.

Eustathius informs us, that Aristarchus, and Aristophanes the grammarian, thought the verse quoted at the head of this remark to be the conclusion of the Odyssey, and

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair; 320

consequently they judged the remaining part of this book, and the whole twenty fourth, supposititious: but those who were of a contrary opinion replied, that by ending the poem with that verse, many incidents of great importance would be rejected; for instance, the recapitulation of the whole *Odyssey*, and especially the discovery of *Ulysses* to his father *Laertes*, with all the beautiful fictions contained in it. They add, that if the little relation that the beginning of that book bears to the subject of the poem, be a reason for the rejection of it, we must, for the same reason, abridge the poem, and reject a multitude of the fables which are scattered through the whole course of it. It may therefore be conjectured, that *Aristarchus* and *Aristophanes* were not of opinion that the poem ended with this verse, but only the most necessary and important incidents. *Casaubon*, in a remark upon a passage of *Strabo*, favours the opinion of *Aristarchus*, for he there speaks of the last book as if he suspected it to be spurious; and *Rapin* joins in the same judgment. *Homer* is to be defended in another manner, than by such arguments as are brought in answer to *Aristarchus*. The same objection has been made against the two last books of the *Iliad*, as against these of the *Odyssey*; the former ought to have ended with the decisive action in the death of *Hector*, and the latter with the discovery of *Ulysses* to *Penelope*, when his happiness seems to be established. But there is no weight in these objections. There is a difference between the *unravelling* of the action, and the full *accomplishment* of it; the action is unravelled by the death of the suitors; but there are consequences arising from their deaths that hinder the accomplishment of the action, namely, the danger of the resentments of their friends, who rise in arms to revenge their slaughter; and till their insurrection is pacified, *Ulysses* cannot be said to be in a state of security. The subject of the *Iliad* is the anger of

But in discourse the king and consort lay,
 While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away ;
 Intent he hears Penelope disclose
 A mournful story of domestic woes,

Achilles : that of the Odyſſey, the re-eſtabliſhment of Ulyſſes in his dominions : now, the anger of Achilles ends not with the death of Hector, nor is Ulyſſes fully re-eſtabliſhed by the death of the ſuitors ; he has another obſtacle to overcome, and till the commotions of the Ithacans are appeaſed, the deſign of the poem is not executed, which is to ſhew Ulyſſes in peaceful poſſeſſion of his palace and authority. We ſee in this very book that Ulyſſes is forced to fly from his own palace ; can he then be ſaid to be re-eſtabliſhed in tranquillity : this very action demonſtrates, that what follows is part of the ſubject of the poem, and ſuch a part, as if it had not been related, would have given us room to imagine that Homer had never finiſhed it, or that the concluſion of it had been loſt. The beginning of the action is his ſailing from Troy toward his country ; the middle contains all the calamities he ſuſtains in his return, the diſorders of his family before and after it ; and the end of the action is his re-eſtabliſhment in the peaceful poſſeſſion of his kingdoms, when he is acknowledged by his wife, father, family, and ſubjects : now this is not compleated till the very end of the laſt book, and conſequently that book is not ſpurious, but eſſential. The poet had ended very injudiciously, if he had ſtopped before ; for the reader would have remained unſatisfied in two neceſſary points, viz how he was made known to Laertes, and what vengeance the chief families of the nation endeavoured to take againſt the deſtroyers of their ſons ; but this ſtorm being once blown over, and all his ſubjects, who had taken arms, being either vanquiſhed or appeaſed, the action is compleated in all its parts, and conſummates the Odyſſey.

v. 324. *A mournful ſtory of domeſtic woes.*] It is with

His servants insults, his invaded bed, 325
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,

great judgment that the poet passes thus briefly over the story of Penelope; he makes her impatience to hear the history of Ulysses the pretended occasion of her conciseness; the true reason is, he is unwilling to tire his reader by repeating what he already knows: it is likewise remarkable, that Ulysses does not begin his own adventures by a detail of his sufferings during the war of Troy: for this would have been foreign to the design of the *Odyssey*; but with his sailing from Troy to the Cicons, and enters directly into the subject of it. He likewise concludes an epitome of the whole *Odyssey* in the compass of one and thirty lines; and purposely contracts it, because we are already acquainted with the whole relation.

Lycophron has given us a summary of the wanderings of Ulysses; which if any one is desirous to compare with this of Homer, he will see the difference between a clear, and an obscure writer. Tibullus in his panegyric on Messalla has been more successful than Lycophron, he follows the order of Homer, and treads directly in his footsteps.

Nam Ciconumque manus adversis repulit armis,

Non valuit Lotos captos avertere cursus;

Cessit et Etnææ Neptunius incola rupis,

Victa Maronæo sedatus lumina Baccho.

Vexit et Æolios placidum per Nerea ventos;

Incultos adiit Læstrygonas, etc.

Dacier is of opinion, that this recapitulation in Homer has a very good effect. I will translate her observation. We learn from it, that the subject of the *Odyssey* is not alone the return of Ulysses to his country, and his re-establishment in it; but that it comprehends all his wanderings and all his voyages; all that he saw or suffered in his return to it; in a word, all that he underwent after he

His generous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
 And the wild riots of the suitor-train.
 The king alternate a dire tale relates,
 Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates; 330
 All he unfolds: his list'ning spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale,
 Sleepless devours each word: and hears, how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain;
 How to the land of Lote unblest he sails; 335
 And images the rills, and flow'ry vales!
 How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore;
 How the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
 From friendly Æolus with prosp'rous gales; 340

set sail from the shores of Troy: another advantage we reap from it is, that we see the order and train of the adventures of his hero, as they really happened, naturally and historically: for in his relation of them in his poem, he uses an artificial order; that is, he begins at the latter end, and finds an opportunity to insert all that preceeds the opening of his poem by way of narration to the Phæacians: here he sets every event in its natural order, so that with a glance of the eye we may distinguish what gives continuity to the action, and what is comprehended in it. By this method we are able to separate the time of the duration of the poem from the time of the duration of the action; for in reality the poem begins many years before the return of Ulysses; but Homer begins his action but thirty five days before he lands in his own country. In the course therefore of the *Odyssey*, Homer gave us the artificial, here the natural order; which is an ease and assistance to the memory of the reader.

Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores :
 How on the barb'rous Læstrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
 How scarce himself surviv'd : he paints the bow'r, 345
 The spells of Circe and her magic pow'r ;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death ;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade ; 350
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts !
 Then how unharm'd he past the Siren-coasts,
 The jutting rocks, where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death ! How his companions slay 355
 The oxen sacred to the god of day,

v. 355. ——— *How his companions slay*

The oxen sacred to the god of day.]

The story of these oxen is fully related, lib. 12. I refer to the annotations. The crime of the companions of Ulysses was sacrilege, they having destroyed the herds sacred to a god. These herds were said to be immortal : I have there given the reason of it, but too concisely, and will therefore add a supplement from the Polyhymnia of Herodotus ; I ought to have mentioned, that the body of soldiers called Immortal, was a select number of men in the army of Xerxes : so named, because upon the death of any one of their number whether by war or sickness, another was immediately substituted in his room, so that they never amounted to more or less than ten thousand. If we apply this piece of history to the herds of Apollo, it excellently explains Homer's poetry : they are called Immortal, because, upon the death of any one of

Till Jove in wrath the ratt'ing tempest guides,
And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides :

the whole herd, another was brought into its place ; they are said neither to increase nor decay, because they were always of a fixed number, and continually supplied upon any vacancy.

The reader will be apprized of the heinousness of the crime in killing these oxen, from an observation of Bochart, p. 314. The Phœnicians and Egyptians so superstitiously abstained from the flesh of the ox, that, as Porphyry affirms, they would sooner feed on human flesh than that of such beasts. Ælian tells us, that it was death among the Phrygians to kill a labouring ox ; and Varro, Rust. lib. 2. cap. 5. thus writes ; *ab hoc antiqui manus ita abstinere voluerunt, ut capite sanxerint, si quis occidisset.* Thus also Columella, in Præfat. l. 7. *Cujus tanta fuit apud antiquos veneratio, ut tam capitale esset bovem necasse, quam civem.*

I have been the more full upon this head, to shew that Homer's fiction is built upon a foundation of truth, and that he writes according to the religion of the ancients : Rapin is very severe upon him for ascribing the death of the companions of Ulysses, to the violation of these herds of Apollo. " The reason, says he, why they are destroyed is very ridiculous, because, lib. 1.

————— They dar'd to prey

On herds devoted to the god of day.

" This is certainly a far-fetched destruction : the hero, " or the poet was willing to be freed from them." But from this observation, they will be found to be guilty of sacrilege, and a violation of what was regarded by the world with the utmost veneration ; and consequently the crime is adequate to the punishment. Besides, Horace, Epist. 6. lib. 1. gives sentence again these companions of Ulysses.

How struggling through the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs; 360
 Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet reluctant amorous delay;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life exempt from age and woe:
 How sav'd from storms Phæacia's coast he trod, 365
 By great Alcinoüs honour'd as a god,
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.
 He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
 A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370
 Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
 Minerva rushes through th' aerial way,

— *Carite cera*

*Digni, remigium vitiosum Ithacensis Ulyssæi;
 Cui potior patria fuit interdicta voluptas.*

v. 361. *Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay.*] This is a circumstance, observes madam Dacier, that Ulysses ought by no means to forget; for it gives him an opportunity to pay an high compliment to his wife, by letting her know he preferred her person to that of Calypso a goddess: this is the reason why he enlarges upon it in five verses; whereas he concludes most of the other adventures in little more than one. But, adds that lady, we may easily believe, that he was silent about the nature of his conversation with that nymph; and indeed it would have lessened the compliment, and perhaps his welcome home, if he had not been able to keep a secret; he is very cautious in this respect; he enlarges upon the fondness of Calypso for his person, but suppresses, for a very obvious reason, the kind returns he made for her civilities.

And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills :

Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375

And thus with thought mature the monarch said.¹

My queen, my consort ! through a length of years,
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
Thou, for thy lord ; while me th' immortal Pow'rs
Detain'd-reluctant from my native shores. 380

Now, blest again by heav'n, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway :
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty'd folds, with gifts or spoils.

But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes 385

With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies ;

The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.

But hear, though wise ! this morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd ; 390

Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away !

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
To wake his son ; and bid his friends arise.

To arms ! aloud he cries : his friends obey, 395

With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array,
And pass the city-gate ; Ulysses leads the way. }

Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

v. 398. ———— *Pallas shrouds*

The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.]

Ulysses, to avoid observation, leaves the city at the point

of day, before the darkness was quite dispelled; this is the suggestion of his own wisdom, which is figured by Minerva.

This book ends in the morning of the forty first day. There are but few verses in the translation, more than in Homer : I speak it not as if this were a beauty, it may as well be a fault ; our heroic verse consists but of ten syllables, the Greek oftentimes of seventeen, as in this verse,

Ἄυτις ἔπειτα πίδοντι κυλίνδετο λᾶας αἰναιδής.

We therefore write with the disadvantage of seven syllables, which makes it generally impossible to comprehend the sense of one line in Homer within the compass of one line in a translation, with any tolerable beauty; but in some parts, where the subject seemed to hang heavy, this has been attempted; with what success, must be left to the reader.

... before the danger was quite apparent. ...
... of his own wisdom, which is shown by ...

This book ends in the morning of the forty fifth day. There are but few verses in the translation, more than in the original. I think it not as if it were a beauty, it may be a fault; one heroic verse contains a lot of our English. The Greek ottomans of the present, as in the verse.

11. The above is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the Court.

It is therefore with the disadvantage of being
 light, which makes it generally impossible to compare
 the taste of one wine in France with the taste of one
 in a translation with any tolerable beauty; but in
 some parts, where the liquid seemed to hang heavy, this
 has been attempted; with what success, must be left to
 the reader.

100. 100.

THE
ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign

Conveys the dead; a lamentable train!

The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,

Or in soft number seals the wakeful eye,

It has been already proved, that this book is the genuine work of Homer; but perhaps the reader may not be displeased to see the reasons why it was rejected by so great a critic as Aristarchus: I shall therefore lay them before him from Didymus and Spondanus.

Aristarchus affirms, that this is the only place in Homer, where Mercury performs the office of conducting the souls of the dead; and that there is no proof he was known so early by the title of *Ψυχοπομπος*; that this is

That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day,
Points out the long, uncomfortable way.

the only passage where he is called Cyllenius; that the ceremony of his guiding the souls is contrary to other descriptions of Homer, where they all descend without a guide into the mansions of the dead, even before the funeral rites. That it is absurd to imagine a *white rock* in these kingdoms of darkness, *etc.* To these Didymus thus replies. If a single mention of any incident in Homer were a reason for its objection, abundance of passages must be rejected. He thinks it a sufficient argument, that Mercury was called *ψυχονομος*, and Cyllenius in the days of Homer, that he is here mentioned under these titles; but this is begging the question. He adds, that although the souls of the dead descend without a guide in other places, this hinders not but they may descend with one; for they are in other places only said in general to descend, whereas here the manner of their descent is particularized. Neither is it any objection against this book, to say that it is contrary to the manner of Homer to describe the shades of the dead received immediately into the state of Achilles, Agamemnon, *etc.* before the performance of their funeral ceremonies; this, says he, is a favour granted by Mercury to Ulysses, who was descended from that deity, he being the father of Arcisus, and consequently great grandfather to Ulysses. It was the opinion of the ancients, that the shades of the deceased could visit the earth before the obsequies were finished, but not afterwards; this is evident from the words of Patroclus, *Iliad* 23.

————— To the farther shore,
When once we pass, the soul returns no more.

It is therefore out of favour to Ulysses, that Mercury introduces these shades into the region where Agamemnon resided, before the funeral ceremonies, that they might

Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.

not return to earth and disquiet Ulysses. But there may be a stronger objection made against the former part of this book; namely, that this is an episode which has no relation to the principal subject, and that we may retrench it without destroying any part of the action essential to the *Odyssey*: but it may be answered, that though it makes no part of the principal action, yet it has a sufficient connection with it: it is the sequel of the death of the suitors, and consequently the principal action is the cause of it; it is drawn and deduced from it, and Homer makes a very happy use of it to adorn and diversify his poem, with the history of what happened before Troy, after the conclusion of the *Iliad*; and in particular, with the death of Achilles, and a description of his funeral ceremonies. Didymus, Dacier.

Plato, in the beginning of his third dialogue, *de Repub.* brings an heavy charge against Homer, for the disadvantageous character he gives of a future state. He quotes the similitude of the bats, and affirms, that the dreadful description of the condition of the dead, must deter mankind from hazarding their lives, even in the cause of their country. 'Let us then, says that author, with the permission of Homer and other poets, reject such relations, not because they are unpoetical, not because they are unpleasant to read, but because by how much they are more pleasant and poetical, by so much they are more dangerous, and to be kept from our youth, and men, who are born to assert their liberty with the hazard of their lives, and to prefer death to slavery.' It must be allowed, that this is strong reasoning, and it is not easy to guard the doctrine of Homer from such unhappy consequences; for why should men chuse to die, rather than be slaves, when by death they fall into a worse condition? It will not be an answer to say that Homer asserts a threefold state in futurity, *viz.* of the soul, the *ἄδολαι* or *ve-*

As in a cavern of some rifted den,
 Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene ; 10
 Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
 They move, and murmurs run through all the rock :
 So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
 And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
 And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends, 15
 And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
 And Leucas' rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,

hicle, and the body : and that while the vehicle is in this condition of horrors, the soul may be happy ; for still the state of the dead is represented as a state of horror, and man is in part, namely, in his *ἄδωλον*, miserable after death : nay, so miserable, that even Hercules, who was a god, and received amongst the deities, is yet tormented in hell, lib. XI.

Here how'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shades surround,
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
 Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow.

It will indeed be a vindication of Homer as a poet, to say, that he wrote according to the opinion of his age ; and that such as was the notion of the ancients of a future state, such is his description of it. I will only add, that we may collect from Plato, that he judged this book genuine, for he quotes this passage as Homer's.

v. 17. *And Leucas' rock*——] This description of the descent into hell is more particular than that in the XIth *Odyssey* ; and each particular is well suited to the subject ; the descent is fabled to be by the ocean, because the sun seems to descend through it into night, or

And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell

In ever flow'ring meads of asphodel. 20

the region of darkness, in the western parts of heaven. Milton fables the sun to rise through the gates of light, after the manner of the ancients.

—————Till morn,
Wak'd by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of light—————

The circumstance likewise of going through the region of dreams is well chosen; dreams are the attendants of sleep, the brother of death; they come by night, and are therefore well imagined to have relation to the kingdom of death, and to be introductory to it; Virgil, in the descent of Æneas into hell, has borrowed this image.

—————*Quem sedem somnia vulgo
Vana tenere ferunt*—————

The god of sleep there hides his heavy head,
And empty dreams on every leaf are spread.

The only circumstance liable to objection is, the Leucadian, or *white rock*, which Aristarchus thought improperly placed in the road to the realms of darkness; but, replies Eustathius, this is only meant of a rock standing on the extremities of the earth, or a rock on which the last rays of the sun fall. Dacier imagines that there is a further meaning in the expression: 'There is an island over against Acarnania, on the west of Ithaca, called Leucas, from a white rock standing in it; this rock was famous in antiquity, because lovers in despair threw themselves from the top of it into the ocean; it was called *the lovers leap*, and being thus remarkable for the deaths of numbers of people, Homer places it here.' This is no ill explication; for a rock may well be feign-

The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air!
 Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;
 Ajax, and great Achilles, are no more!
 Yet still a master ghost, the rest he aw'd,
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

25

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er.
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atides: him in pomp pursu'd
 And solemn sadness through the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægythus fell.
 O mighty chief! Pelides thus began,
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man!

30

35

ed to stand at the entrance of the region of death, by
 which so many persons had entered into it.

Ovid, in his epistles, mentions this Leucadian rock.

———O you that love in vain,

Fly hence, and seek the fair Leucadian main:
 There stands a rock from whose impending steep,
 Apollo's fane surveys the rolling deep;
 There injur'd lovers, leaping from above,
 Their flames extinguish, and forget to love.

v. 35. *O mighty chief! Pelides thus began, etc.*
 This appears to be introduced somewhat unnaturally:
 Achilles had now been dead about ten years, and Aga-
 memnon almost as long; it can therefore scarce be re-
 conciled to probability, to imagine that they should not
 have met before this time, and mutually have satisfied

King of a hundred kings : to whom resign'd
The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind.

their curiosities, by relating their several stories at some former interview : Dacier indeed remarks, that we are not to imagine this conference was held at the time when the suitors descended, but upon some preceding occasion, immediately after the death of Agamemnon. If this be allowed, yet the objection remains, that the introduction is forced and unnatural, for then the descent of Mercury, and the shades of the suitors will be no reason why this conference should be here repeated : for so, neither Mercury nor the suitors hear it. But Dacier is undoubtedly in an error ; for *ἕξοι* in the original is the third person plural, and absolutely refers to Mercury and the shades of the suitors ; and therefore it follows that this conference happened at the time of their entrance.

The shades of the suitors, observes Dacier, when they are summoned by Mercury out of the palace of Ulysses, emit a feeble, plaintive, inarticulate sound, *τρίστον βριδὲν* : whereas Agamemnon, and the shades that have long been in the state of the dead, speak articulately. I doubt not but Homer intended to shew, by the former description, that when the soul is separated from the organs of the body, it ceases to act after the same manner, as while it was joined to it ; but how the dead recover their voices afterwards is not easy to understand. In other respects Virgil paints after Homer.

— *pars tollere vocem*

Exiguam : inceptus clamor frustratus hiantes.

They rais'd a feeble cry, with trembling notes,

But the weak voice deceiv'd their gasping throats.

Dryden.

But why should we suppose, with Dacier, that these shades of the suitors have lost the faculty of speaking ? I rather imagine, that the sounds they uttered were signs of com-

Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state ?

And was the noblest the first mark of fate ?

40

Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,

The lot which all lament, and none can shun ;

Oh ! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,

With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round !

Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise 45

Historic marbles to record thy praise :

Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone

Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son,

But heavier fates were destin'd to attend :

What man is happy, till he knows his end ?

50

O son of Peleus ! greater than mankind !

(Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)

Thrice happy thou ; to press the martial plain

Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain :

plaint and discontent, and proceeded not from an inability to speak : after Patroclus was slain, he appears to Achilles, and speaks very articulately to him ; yet, to express his sorrow at his departure, he acts like these suitors : for Achilles

Like a thin smoke beholds the spirit fly,

And hears a feeble, lamentable cry.

Dacier conjectures, that the power of speech ceases in the dead, till they are admitted into a state of rest ; but Patroclus is an instance to the contrary in the Iliad, and Elpenor in the Odyssey, for they both speak before their funeral rites are performed, and consequently before they enter into a state of repose amongst the shades of the happy.

In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray, 55
 Great, and terrific ev'n in death you lay,
 And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way.
 Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
 And all in tempests the dire evening clos'd.
 Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load, 60
 And decent on the fun'ral bed bestow'd.
 Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed;
 Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead
 Each clipt the curling honours of his head.
 Struck at the news, thy azure mother came; 65
 The sea-green sisters waited on the dame.
 A voice of loud lament through all the main
 Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train:

v. 56. *Great, and terrific ev'n in death*—] There is a very peculiar beauty in the versification of Homer in this place:

— οὐ δὲ στεφάλοισι κοίνης
 Κῆρτο μέγας μεγαλωσθί.

The words μέγας μεγαλωσθί set the largeness of the body of Achilles stretched out upon the ground full before our eyes; we see him in the description; the repetition forces it upon our observation, so that the mind has time to dwell upon it, and admire the extent of the limbs of that hero.

v. 68. — *Terror seiz'd the Grecian train.*] This description furnished Aristarchus with another objection to this book: he thought it improbable that the appearance of Thetis, and her sea-nymphs should terrify the whole Grecian army: they say in answer, that all the ocean was in a great commotion as Thetis ascended, or, as Homer expresses it,

Back to the ship the frightened host had fled ;

But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd.

— βῶν δ' ἐπὶ πόντον ὄρωσι
Θισπείην.

This uproar occasioned their fear ; the Greeks were ignorant of the cause of it, and consequently apprehended some dreadful event ; this is evident, for Nestor appeases their consternation by unfolding the reason of the tumult, and shewing them that it was occasioned by the ascent of Thetis.

The reader has undoubtedly observed, how excellently Homer sustains his characters ; Nestor is the wisest man, both in the Iliad and Odyssey : he has the experience of a very great age, and may therefore be supposed to be acquainted with all the most uncommon appearances in nature : the poet accordingly describes him as the only person not afraid in the Grecian army ; there were others undoubtedly as brave as Nestor, but no one so wise ; his intrepidity is therefore to be imputed to his wisdom, not bravery, and this furnishes us with an excellent moral ; that ignorance is usually the source of fear.

The character of Achilles is no less happily supported ; the same love of glory is visible in all he speaks, that distinguished his character through the Iliad : he still prefers a short life with fame, before old-age without it,

Ὡς ὄφελος τιμῆς ἀπούμενος ἢς περ ἄνασσι,
Δήμῳ ἐνὶ Τρώϊϊ θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπισπέν.

The sentiment is truly heroic ; dishonour is worse than death, the happiness or misery of which is not to be measured by time, but glory ; long life is but lengthened mortality, and they who live the longest have but the small privilege of creeping more leisurely than others to their graves.

(From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
And long vicissitudes of human things.)

" Forbear your flight : fair Thetis from the main

" To mourn Achilles leads her azure train.

Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75

Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep,

Round thee, the Muses, with alternate strain,

In ever-consecrating verse, complain,

Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,

And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80

v. 77. *Round thee, the Muses*——] It is impossible, observes Dacier, not to be struck with the noble fictions of Homer in honour of Achilles ; every circumstance is great. A whole army is in tears ; the Muses celebrate his glory ; a goddess and her nymphs ennoble it with their presence and lamentations. At the funerals of other heroes, women and captives are the mourners ; here the muses personally appear. Heaven and earth, men and gods interest themselves in the obsequies of so great an hero ! Yet from this place Aristarchus draws an argument for rejecting this book : Homer, says he, no where else gives the number of the nine muses, insinuating that their number was not fixed in his age ; but Homer frequently invokes the muses, why then should he be ignorant of the number ? and if not ignorant of it, why might he not mention it ? Aristarchus further adds, that it is absurd to imagine the body of Achilles could be preserved seventeen days without burial ; but this may be ascribed to the power of Thetis, who may be easily supposed to preserve it. Besides, why might not the body be embalmed ? and then there will be no occasion for a miracle, and the interposition of a goddess : we must remember what she did to the body of Patroclus in the Iliad.

Till sev'nteen nights and sev'nteen days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
 To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep and fable oxen flay;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pyle
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mixt clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorpt in all embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase.
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)
 There we thy relicks, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:

*v. 97. There we thy relicks, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend.]*

This is agreeable to the request made to Achilles by the
 ghost of Patroclus, in the Iliad,

Hear then! and as in fate and love we join,
 Ah suffer that my bones may rest with thine!
 That golden urn thy goddess's mother gave,
 May mix our ashes in one common grave!

It is likewise asserted by Homer, that the bones of An-
 tilochus were repositied in the same urn with those of Pa-
 troclus and Achilles; where then is the peculiar honour
 paid to Patroclus, if Antilochus was partaker of it? The

In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
 Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100
 Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound :
 High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th' extended Hellespont surveys ;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast, 105
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
 Heroic prizes and exequial games ;
 The gods assented ; and a round thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day. 110
 Oft have I seen, with solemn fun'ral games,
 Heroes and kings committed to the flames :
 But strength of youth, or valour of the brave
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
 Such were the games by azure Thetis given : 115
 And such thy honours, oh belov'd of heaven !

difference is, the bones of Achilles and Patroclus were mixed in the urn, those of Antilochus lay separately.

Homer adds, that the whole army raised a monument to Achilles ; this is done according to his own injunctions in the Iliad, for speaking of the tomb of Patroclus he thus proceeds ;

Mean-time erect the tomb with pious hands,
 A common structure on the humble sands ;
 Hereafter Greece, some nobler work may raise,
 And late posterity record our praise.

Achilles means, that when he is dead the Greeks should raise one common monument to himself and Patroclus, which we see here effected.

Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
 Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
 But what to me avail my honours gone,
 Successful toils, and battles bravely won? 120
 Doom'd by stern Jove, at home to end my life,
 By curst Ægysthus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
 Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
 On each majestic form they cast a view, 125
 And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
 But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
 His antient host Amphimedon survey'd;
 Son of Melanthus! he began, O say!
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130
 To tread the downward, melancholy way?
 Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?
 Were all these partners of one native air?
 Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
 Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep? 135
 Did nightly thieves, or pyrates cruel bands,
 Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?

v. 127. *But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
 His antient host Amphimedon survey'd.*]

An objection has been raised against this passage, and it has been thought an absurdity that Agamemnon should be the guest of Amphimedon, and not of Ulysses, when he came to make an address to him, and was within his territories. Didymus answers; that this conduct in Agamemnon was occasioned by the refusal of Ulysses to assist in the war of Troy: Agamemnon resented his denial, and went to the house of Amphimedon.

Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
 Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
 Inform thy guest; for such I was of yore,
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
 Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king of men! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate.
 Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame;

v. 142. *Forc'd a long month——*

To move the great Ulysses to the war.]

It is not obvious why Ulysses, who was a person of the greatest bravery, should be unwilling to engage in such an action of glory, as the war of Troy: was it because he foresaw that it would be a work of danger, as Eustathius imagines, or was he dissatisfied in the ground of it, which was only to revenge the rape of Helen, and nothing but a private injury? the former is a reason unworthy of his heroic character, the latter is no more than a conjecture. It may possibly be a truer reason, that he was unwilling to forsake his wife, of whom he was very fond, and whom he newly had married; but then it must be allowed, that he prefers his love to his glory. Eustathius recites the manner how he was drawn to engage in the war of Troy: Ulysses, to deliver himself from the importunities of his friends to assist Agamemnon, pretended madness, and yoked two animals of a different kind to a plough, and began to work with them; Palamedes, who suspected the imposture, took his son Telemachus, an infant, and laid him in the furrow before the plough; Ulysses turned aside not to hurt his child, and this discovered the imposition. Aristotle takes notice of the great judgment of Homer in suppressing this incident concerning Ulysses, it being unworthy of the bravery of an hero: He is proving, chap. 8. of his

Her coy reserve, and prudence mixt with pride,
 Our common suit not granted, nor deny'd;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd;
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.

Her hand, laborious in delusion, spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread;
 Ye peers, she cry'd, who press to gain my heart
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part,
 Yet a short space, your rival suit suspend;
 Till this funereal web my labours end:

Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
 Left, when the fates his royal ashes claim,
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;

Poetics, that all the actions of an hero's life are not to be inserted in an epic poem, for the actions of the same man are so many and different, that we can never reduce them to unity: for this reason Homer mentions not all the adventures of Ulysses but only such as have relation to the subject of the Odyssey; he knew that this counterfeit madness had no connection either in truth or probability with the subject of his poem, and therefore he forbears the mention of it. The reader will understand the meaning of Aristotle, if he considers that the subject of the Odyssey is the story of a person who suffers great calamities in the return to his country, before he establishes himself in his dominions: now, the counterfeited madness of Ulysses has no connection with these sufferings, and consequently is judiciously omitted by Homer as foreign to the design of the poem, and contrary to the unity of the action. A detail of all the adventures of an hero's life is the province of history; the relation of one single great, and surprizing action is the subject of epic poetry.

Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd : our gen'rous train complies,
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.
The work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,
Each following night revers'd the toils of day.

Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;
The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Forc'd, she completes it ; and before us lay
The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
Display'd the radiance of the night and day.

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil,
Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.

Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
And speedy lands, and secretly confers.

They plan our future ruin, and resort
Confed'rate, to the city and the court.

First came the son ; the father next succeeds,
Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads ;
Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care,
And hung with rags, that flatter'd in the air.

Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?
Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
Ill us'd by all ! to ev'ry wrong resign'd.

Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind.

But when, arising in his wrath t'obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way :
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room :
 Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
 The archer's strife : the source of future woes,

v. 195. *Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose,*
 etc.] We have already seen, that it was the contrivance
 of Penelope to propose the bow, to gain time to defer
 the marriage hour ; how then comes Amphimedon to as-
 scribe it to the art of Ulysses ? Eustathius answers, that
 Amphimedon is in an error, and that though the contriv-
 ance was from Penelope, yet Amphimedon could not
 come to the knowledge of it ; and such stratagems being
 agreeable to the character of Ulysses, he imputes the ac-
 tion to him rather than Penelope.

It is impossible not to take notice that Homer makes
 repetition after repetition : Agamemnon speaks the same
 words, as in the eleventh *Odyssey* ; Amphimedon the
 same, as in the second ; and the whole account of the
 suitors destruction is no more than a recital of what the
 reader already knows. Was Homer tired at the end of
 his work, and would not give himself the labour of inven-
 tion ? I confess we may lose our appetite to see the same
 entertainment thus continually served up in the very same
 manner, without so much as new garnishment. I fear
 the words of Ulysses may sometimes be applicable to Ho-
 mer.

And what so tedious as a twice told tale ?

Besides, this whole infernal interview is merely ornamental,
 which the poet was at liberty to insert or omit according
 to his judgment, without breaking the thread of the prin-
 cipal action ; it might therefore be wished that he had
 substituted some other incident in the room of it, and gi-
 ven a greater diversity to the story : if by laying the scene

And omen of our death ! in vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew :
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands ;
 In vain we threat ; Telemachus commands : 200
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent ;
 Through ev'ry ring the victor arrow went.

in hell, he designed to raise the wonder and curiosity of the reader, (who cannot fail of having his attention awakened to see a prospect opened beyond the bounds of nature, and to look into the state of departed heroes) yet it must be confessed that this design has already been fully executed in the eleventh of the *Odyssey*. But the poet seems to introduce the descent for the information of the dead rather than the living ; Agamemnon is told how the suitors were destroyed by Ulysses ; and Achilles how nobly the Greeks performed his funeral obsequies ; incidents that very little contribute to the story of the *Odyssey*. In short, the main action stands still during this whole episode, which takes up almost half the book, and the latter part of the episode presents no new object to amuse and entertain us. But,

——— *Cynthius aurem*
Vellit ———

I betray my own want of judgment, rather than discover Homer's errors. I will only add, that the reader will be fully convinced that this whole episode may be omitted, by observing how well the story will be carried on, with a regular connection by beginning the book with these words,

"Οἱ δ' ἔπειτα ἐν πόλει κατέβαν, τάχα δ' ἄγρον ἰόντο, etc.

So that if I could in any part subscribe to the opinion of Aristarchus for the rejection of this book, it should be only for the former part of it ; but I am persuaded, from the nobleness of the verses, that the whole is genuine,

Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood;
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god! } 205

First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;

Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all:
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans; 210
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

Thus great Atrides! thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon' fair realms above.
 Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
 Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor: 215
 No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
 O'er the pale corse! the honours of the dead.

Oh blest Ulysses (thus the king express
 His sudden rapture) in thy consort blest!

Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd; 220
 Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.

Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
 And model to the future age, shall last:

The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
 (Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225

Not such, oh, Tyndarus! thy daughter's deed,
 By whose dire hand her king and husband bled:

Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
 Example dread! and theme of tragic song!

The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
 And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
Confer'd the mournful phantoms of the dead.

v. 232. *Thus in the regions of eternal shade.*] I think it will not be improper here to particularize from whence antiquity raised the fictions concerning hell, and the nature of it, as we have it in Diodorus Siculus.

Pluto, observes that author, was the first that introduced the rites of sepulture, and other ceremonies bestowed on the dead: this is the reason why the ancients imagined him to be the king of the dead.

Rhadamanthus is said to have been the most just man in the world; he severely punished robbers and other notorious offenders, and from his singular reputation for integrity was feigned to be the judge of the good and bad after death; and for the same reason Minos was joined with him in the same dignity.

Homer borrowed his fictions from Orpheus, Orpheus from the Ægyptians: it was Orpheus who introduced the opinion of the pains of the damned, and of the Elysian fields, and taught that the souls of the dead were conducted by Mercury into the infernal mansions: (a proof that he was called *ψυχοπομπος* before the days of Homer.) Diodorus proceeds and mentions the beginning of this book, how Homer feigns that Mercury leads the shades of the dead by the ocean, the Leucadian rock, and the gates of the sun: a plain instance that he looked upon this book as the genuine work of Homer. All these fables, continues Diodorus, are of Ægyptian extract; by the ocean, Homer means Nilus; by the gates of the sun, he means Heliopolis, a city sacred to the sun; the meadow into which the shades are conducted, denotes the pleasant meadows full of canes adjoining to Memphis; and the dead are feigned to reside there, because it was the general burial place amongst the Ægyptians. Concerning Cocytus, Acheron, *etc.* the reader may consult the first note upon the eleventh *Odyssey*.

While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
Past to Laertes' cultivated land. 235

Plutarch, in his treatise of Isis and Osiris, agrees with Diodorus concerning the extraction of these fables from Egypt, and mentions at Memphis the gates of lamentation and oblivion; that is, of Lethe and Cocytus; which being opened at the burial of the dead, give a doleful and groaning sound. From hence they are thus described by Homer in the tenth *Odyssey*.

And where slow rolling from the Stygian bed
Cocytus' lamentable waters spread,
Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.

These observations give light to most of Homer's fictions concerning hell, and shew that his poetry is built upon the customs of antiquity.

Macrobius explains all these particulars after a different manner: this solution supposes a state of pre-existence of the soul: 'If, says that author, to die be the same as
' to go to the infernal regions; to enjoy the supernal, is
' then to live; and therefore before philosophy prevail-
' ed, the body itself was supposed to be the infernal re-
' ceptacle of the soul, into which she descended as into a
' prison, from above; this was thought the sepulchre of
' the soul, and the cave of Pluto. The river of oblivion
' denotes the error of the soul, which forgets the maje-
' sty of the former state she enjoyed before she entered
' the body: Phlegethon, the ardour of our desires, and
' flames of anger; Acheron, all our words and actions
' that bring us into sorrows; so likewise, Styx implies
' our hatred, Cocytus our grief and lamentation. Thus
' also the punishments in hell are verified upon earth:
' the vultur which preys upon the liver of Tityus, is the
' sting of a guilty conscience; the ambitious man is the
' Sisyphus, who is eternally aspiring, and yet always dis-

The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
 And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
 There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
 With useful buildings round the lowly court:
 Where the few servants that divide his care, 240
 Took their laborious rest, and homely fare;
 And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
 With constant duty tends his drooping age.

'appointed; the avaritious man is the Tantalus who
 'starves amidst his plenty,' etc.

By joining these two interpretations together, we have at once the double pleasure of a beautiful fable and instructive moral; from the whole we may collect, that although the ancients were ignorant of the true nature of a future state, yet that they believed it, and expected there would be punishments and rewards in it. This note is of use to explain several passages in the eleventh Odyssey.

v. 236. *The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain.*] Eustathius very well explains these words, in which the Greek may be construed to signify that Laertes had purchased this place of retirement by his labour and industry: but probably Homer intends to express an allotment or portion of ground which was assigned Laertes by the public, as a reward of his heroic labours in war, and bravery in conquering his enemies, like that mentioned in the Iliad.

The Lycians grant a chosen space of ground,
 With woods, with vineyards, and with harvests crown'd.

It may either be so, or Homer intending solely to paint the laborious life of Laertes, added this circumstance of his encreasing his rural cell by his industry, as an instance of it; though the latter is more suitable to the character of a king.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command. 244

Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the Pow'rs divine.

Alone, and unattended, let me try

If yet I share the old man's memory :

If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know, 250

(Their light and dearest object long ago)

Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe ?

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield ;

The house they enter, and he seeks the field ;

Through rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,

And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round. 256

Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,

Nor servants, absent on another care ;

To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,

Their orchard bounds to strengthen and adorn. 260

But all alone the hoary king he found ;

His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around ;

His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,

Fenc'd with a double cap of goat-skin hair :

His buskins old, in former service torn, 265

But well repair'd ; and gloves against the thorn.

v 266.——*Gloves against the thorn.*] Casaubon, in his remarks upon Athenæus, lib. 12. cap. 2. affirms, that antiently neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever wore any covering on their hands, which are now used so universally, that they are worn by the meanest people ; but this place is an instance of Casaubon's mistake : it is true, Xenophon gives this practice as an argument of the

In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
And clear'd a plant, cucumber'd with its wood.

luxury and delicacy of the Persians, who suffered no part of the body to be exposed to the air, but wore *καὶ περὶ ἀγκυαῖς ταῖς χερσὶ χειρίδας, καὶ δακτυλίδας ἔχοντι*, 'gloves upon their hands, and coverings upon their very fingers.' Pliny the younger mentions the same custom among the Romans, *Manus Hieme manicis munitbantur! ut ne coeli quidem asperitas ullam studiis tempus eriperet*. This then is the difference; the Persians wore these hand coverings out of effeminacy and delicacy: whereas in Greece they were used only out of necessity, as a defence in rural labour, as appears from Laertes, they being never mentioned upon any other occasion, either in the Iliad or Odyssey. Dacier.

v. 267. *In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
And clear'd a plant, cucumber'd with its wood.*]

This is the first appearance of Laertes; he is the very picture of melancholy, his dress, his employ, and solitary life, all discover a fixed sorrow and contempt of the world. It has been a dispute whether we are to ascribe this retreat of Laertes to a meanness of spirit, who forsakes his station, and is unequal to adversity; or to wisdom, and a noble neglect of the pomp and splendor of the world, by which he prefers a little rural retreat to all the magnificence of a palace, and a small garden to all the dominions of a king. Plutarch severely censures his conduct: 'A person, observes that writer, who wastes his age in his bed, or in trivial affairs, makes himself an object of contempt, as Homer teaches by the examples of Nestor and Laertes: Nestor, by engaging in the war of Troy, obtained the utmost veneration; while Laertes, who abandoned himself to solitude, was despised universally.' I am unwilling to subscribe to this observation, being of opinion, that the silent virtues of a good man in solitude are more amiable than all the noisy honours of active life. The picture of Laertes is undoubt-

Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing ev'ry line, 270

edly drawn very naturally; a tender father is afflicted for the loss of a brave and beloved son, this bitter ingredient gives a disrelish to all the vanities of life; he is deprived of an object that he valued above the world, he therefore neglects it as having nothing worthy of his cares, and abandons it for privacy and tranquillity. Menedemus in Terence is the very copy of Laertes in Homer; an instance that he thought Homer's an exact representation of human nature: and the applause with which that comedy was received, shews that all Rome was of the same judgment. Sorrow loves to be alone, rather seeks for amusements than business and glory; and it may perhaps be true, that it shews more greatness of soul to resign a kingdom than to conquer it. Pride, ambition, and guilty passions have raised many to the top of human glory; but it evidences that a person is not influenced by vicious sentiments, who knows how to moderate his desires, and is able to retire from the splendor of a crown into obscurity. Tully mentions the manner of life in Laertes, without condemnation; the place is to be found in his Cato Major, where he speaks of the innocent amusements of old age, and illustrates his assertions by the example of Laertes. *Homerus Laertem lenientem desiderium, quod capiebat e filio, colentem agrum et stercorentem facit.* But Tully mistakes Homer, for Laertes is not found dunging his ground.

Perhaps instead of λισρεύοντα, he read κοπήσοντα, as it is used in the seventeenth Odyssey.

— Ὀδυσσεὺς τέμενος μέγα κοπήσοντες.

Or perhaps he quoted by memory. I will only add, that Tully in his retirement at Tusculum, used to write to his friends, that he there led the life of Laertes: and Tully was too sensible of his own worth, to speak any thing to the disparagement of it.

The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their wat'ry store;
 The much enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul?
 Not so: his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay, 280

v. 279. *Not so: his judgment takes the winding way*
 It has been objected, that Ulysses here acts contrary to filial piety, and permits a tender father to continue in his sorrows, when it was in his power immediately to make him happy, by a discovery of his person; they likewise condemn the *κροτομία ἔπειτα*, which Homer puts into the mouth of Ulysses. It must be allowed, that those words are frequently used by the poet in a bad sense, and signify *heart-wounding, or reproachful words*; but here they are not so to be understood; they only imply, *that Ulysses blamed Laertes out of tenderness for taking no more care of his person*: this is not a reproach, but the language of fondness and affection: or perhaps the poet meant to express that this inquiry raised images of sorrow in the soul of Laertes, and *wounded his heart* by naming the lost Ulysses. Eustathius solves the former objection by saying, that Ulysses delayed the discovery, lest the suddenness of joy should prove fatal to Laertes. But Homer undoubtedly paints according to nature; Ulysses bursts into tears at the sight of his father, yet restrains them, and tries if, after twenty years absence, he was known by him; this delay raises the reader's curiosity, makes him, as it were, present at the interview, and impatient to hear the manner of the discovery: besides, this procedure excellently agrees with the general character of Ulysses, who is, upon

More gentle methods on weak age employs,
 And moves the sorrows to enhance the joys.
 Then to his fire with beating heart he moves.
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves :
 Who digging round the plant still hangs his head, 285
 Nor ought remits the work, while thus he said.

Great is thy skill, oh father ! great thy toil,
 Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,
 Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare } 290
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear ;
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
 On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone. ²⁹⁵

Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame ;
 Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim. 295
 Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind ;
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind :
 I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care ;

all emergencies, master of his passions, and remarkable for disguise, and an artful dissimulation ; this disguise has a very happy effect in this place, it holds us in a pleasing suspense, and makes us wait with attention to see the issue of the interview.

v. 298. *I read a monarch in that princely air.*] The words in the Greek are not without obscurity, and Eustathius explains them two ways ; they may either signify, that Laertes appears to be a person of such distinction that he ought to live with more delicacy and dignity, viz. *to bathe, and after a due repast to sleep in state* ; or they imply, that Laertes shews the dignity of a king in his person, who comes from the bath, and dines in state. Ulysses

Book XXIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 247

Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300

These are the rights of age, and should be thine.

Who then thy master, say? and whose the land

So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?

But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most)

Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast? 305

For so reported the first man I view'd,

(Some surly islander, of manners rude)

Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay;

Heedless he whistled, and pursu'd his way.

But thou! whom years have taught to understand, 310

Humanely hear and answer my demand:

A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,

Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?

Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)

When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest; 315

He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,

And old Laertes was his father's name.

To him, whatever to a guest is ow'd

I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;

To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told, 320

Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with gold,

A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames,

And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.

cannot compare Laertes to a king who is fresh from the bath, and dress'd royally, for he tells us, he is covered with sweat and dust; he therefore means that his personage is noble and like a king, that therefore he ought to live like a king, with respect to his food and his bath, and to indulge his age by allowing it ease and refreshment.

At this the father, with a father's fears :
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears) 325
 This is the land ; but ah ! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast :
 Sunk is the glory of this once-fam'd shore !
 Thy antient friend, oh stranger, is no more !
 Full recompence thy bounty else had born ; 330
 For ev'ry good man yields a just return :
 So civil rights demand ; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess'd,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest ?
 That hapless guest, alas ! for ever gone ! 336
 Wretch that he was ! and that I am ! my son !
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn !
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign, 340
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
 Or screaming vulturs scatter through the air :
 Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed,
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead, 345
 Nor his sad consort on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or dropp'd a tender tear !
 But tell me, who thou art ? and what thy race ?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place ?
 Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main ?
 Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train ?

Then thus the son. From Alybas I came,
 My palace there; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born, from Aphidas the king 355
 Of Polyphemon's royal line I spring.
 Some adverse dæmon from Sicania bore
 Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore:
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Reliev'd our weary'd vessel from the sea. 360
 Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
 Ulysses parting through the sable flood;
 Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
 And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
 Well hop'd we then to meet on this fair shore, 365
 Whom heav'n, alas! decreed to meet no more.
 Quick through the father's heart these accents ran;
 Grief seiz'd at once, and wrap'd up all the man;
 Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
 A cloud of ashes on his hoary head. 370

v. 353. ——— *From Alybas I came.*] Ulysses is inexhaustible in his fictions; he here accommodates the names of persons and places to his fortunes: Alybas is supposed to be a city of Italy, afterwards called Metapontium. It is placed by others in Thrace. It is here introduced, to denote the wanderings of Ulysses by the sea, or ἄλῃ: the word *Aphidas*, denotes his generosity, which *saves nothing* towards his friends. He feigns himself to be the grandson of Πολυφήμων, to represent the multitude of his sufferings; his name is Eperitus from ἐπείριστος, the same with περιμάχηλος. from ἐρίζω. to shew the struggle that he has met with in all his adventures, as well as the toils in the war of Troy, and against other enemies. Eustathius.

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
 Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight :

v. 369. ——— *and sorrowing spread*
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.]

This was a common practice amongst the antient orientals, in token of the extremity of sorrow ; it was used amongst the Hebrews, as well as Greeks ; thus Ezek. xxviii. 30. " They shall cast dust upon their heads." Job ii. 12. " They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads." Thus also Achilles in the eighteenth of the Iliad ;

His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
 Those he deforms in dust, and these he tears,

Homer calls it *κένυ αἰθαλόεσσαν*, which does not mean that Laertes threw glowing embers on his head, for he was in his garden, where such ashes were not to be found ; but he means *ζέον*, or *dry dust*, such as arises from substances consumed by fire, or resembling ashes. Eustathius.

v. 371. *Trembling with agonies, etc.]* The Greek expression is remarkable,

——— *ἀνὰ ῥίνας δὲ οἱ ἦδη*
ἀγρυπνέειν πρὸς τὸν ———

A sharp sensation struck his nostrils, Eustathius judges, that the meaning is, that Ulysses perceived himself ready to burst into tears ; a kind of a pricking sharp sensation being felt in the nostrils before the eruption of tears. Casaubon more fully explains it ; he observes, that all violent passions cause a sensation in the nostrils, arising from the ebullition of the spirits, which mount toward the brain, and endeavouring to free themselves from restraint, find a vent by the nostril, and crowding through it, dilate it in their passage ; this is evident from animals, and the nobler kinds of them, as the bull, the horse, the lion, whose nostrils always dilate when moved to anger. A si-

He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face,

I, I am he ; oh father ! rise, behold 375

Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old ;

Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,

Restor'd, and breathing in his native land :

These floods of sorrow, oh my sire, restrain !

The vengeance is compleat ; the suitor train, 380

Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain.

Amaz'd, Laertes. " Give some certain sign,

" If such thou art, to manifest thee mine."

Lo here the wound, he cries, receiv'd of yore,

The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385

When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,

To old Autolychus's realms I went.

Yet by another sign thy offspring know ;

The several trees you gave me long ago,

similar expression is found in the first Idyllium of Theocritus.

Καὶ οἱ αὖτ' ἐριμῆα χολὰ ποτὶ φίλ' ἐκάθισαι.

He speaks of the anger of the god Pan, but it is applicable to all violence of passion. Aristotle, observes Dacier, quotes this verse as applied by Homer to express anger, cap. 8. of his morals to Nicomachus ; but he is evidently in an error ; for there is here no mention of anger : he undoubtedly trusted to his memory, it being sorrow arising from filial tenderness which moves Ulysses. Dacier.

v. 389. *The several trees you gave me long ago,*

While yet a child——]

The word in the original is *παῖδός*, which signifies a *very young boy* : Homer uses it to express the age, when out of a childish simplicity Ulysses asked his father to

While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace, 390
 And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace:
 To ev'ry plant in order as we came,
 Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,
 Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd;
 Twelve pear trees bowing with their pendent load,
 And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd; 396
 Full fifty purple figs; and many a row
 Of various vines that then began to blow,
 A future vintage! when the Hours produce
 Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
 His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
 Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone
 Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown;
 He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd: 405
 Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

grant him such trees. Such requests are very natural in children, and we see, says Dacier, the same practis'd every day; parents out of fondness indulge the requests of their children in such little particularities; and a bird, an horse, *etc.* continues the child's favourite for many years. It must be allowed, that no poet ever followed nature so faithfully as Homer. Virgil perhaps has reached his noblest elevations and sublimities, but there is a greater variety of natural incidents, more exact pictures of human life in Homer than in all other poets. Some painters excel in the boldness of their figures, and know how to draw a hero or a god, but are less happy in lower subjects; but Homer draws universally, and is excellent upon all occasions; he paints the largest figures, or the least sketches, equally natural, and with equal beauty.

Soon as returning life regains its seat,
And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
Yes, I believe, he cries, almighty Jove!
Heav'n rules us yet, and gods there are above. 410

'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid——

But what shall guard us, if the town invade?

If while the news through ev'ry city flies,

All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise;

To this Ulysses. As the gods shall please 415

Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.

Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,

And take the banquet which our cares provide:

There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,

And there the young Telemachus attends. 420

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,

And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.

The swains and young Telemachus they found,

The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.

The hoary king his old Sicilian maid 425

Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.

Pallas attending gives his frame to shine

With awful port, and majesty divine;

His gazing son admires the godlike grace,

And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430

What god, he cry'd, my father's form improves?

How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves!

Oh! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,

Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!

(Reply'd the king elated with his praise) 435

My strength were still, as once in better days:

When the bold Chepalens the leaguer form'd,

And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.

Such were I now, not absent from your deed.

When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440

This arm had aided yours ; this hand bestrown

Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on ;

Nor had the fire been sep'rate from the son. } 445

They commun'd thus ; while homeward bent their way

Their swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day ; 446

Dolius the first, the venerable man,

And next his sons, a long succeeding train,

For due refection to the bow'r they came,

Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame, 450

v. 438. *And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.*
I doubt not but the reader has observed, that Laertes uses the very turn of language and manner of self-commendation so remarkable in almost all the speeches of Nestor : this is to be ascribed to the nature of old-age in general, which loves a little to boast, and relates the exploits of youth with the utmost satisfaction ; or, as Horace describes it,

————— *Laudator temporis acti*
} *Se puero* —————

I will only add, that the reason why Homer described Laertes enlarged with strength and majesty by Minerva is to reconcile the future story to probability ; Laertes acts the hero, engages at the head of his friends, and kills the leader of his enemies ; this might appear to be an exploit too great for a weak old man wasted away with sorrows : the poet therefore knowing that he had lost his natural vigour through age, supplies the defect with preternatural strength, and by this method renders him equal to his future actions.

Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire;
They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
On chairs and beds in order seated round,
They share the gladsome board; the roofs resound.
While thus Ulysses to his antient friend: 455

"Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend;
"The rites have waited long." The chief commands
Their loves in vain; old Dolius spreads his hands,
Springs to his master with a warm embrace,
And fastens kisses on his hands and face: 460

Then thus broke out. Oh long, oh daily mourn'd!
Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return'd!
Conducted sure by heav'n! for heav'n alone
Could work this wonder: welcome to thy own!
And joys and happiness attend thy throne! 465

Who knows thy bless'd, thy wish'd return? oh say
To the chaste queen shall we the news convey?
Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride
Already is it known (the king reply'd, 470
And strait resum'd his seat;) while round him bows
Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows:

Then all beneath their father take their palce,
Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

v. 451. *Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire.*] We are not to imagine that this Sicilian was the wife of Dolius; Homer gives her the title of mother to his children, because she had the care of their education; for he adds, ἡ σφίσις τροφή, she was their nurse, not their mother. Dacier.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread 475
 Through all the city, of the suitors dead.
 In throngs they rise, and to the palace croud ;
 Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.
 Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
 Inhume the natives in their native plain. 480
 The rest in ships are waisted o'er the main.
 Then sad in council all the seniors sate,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.
 Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes : 485
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride,
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.
 Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As mixing words with sighs, he thus began.
 Great deeds, oh friends ! this wond'rous man has wrought,
 And mighty blessings to his country brought. 491
 With ships he parted and a num'rous train,
 Those, and their ships, he bury'd in the main.
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land. 495

v. 481. *The rest in ships are waisted o'er the main.*
 To understand this we must remember, that many of the
 suitors came from the neighbouring islands, Samos, Za-
 cynthus, *etc.* and therefore they are said to be transport-
 ed by sea, to be buried in their native countries : this cu-
 stom prevailed over all the oriental world : but there may
 be a particular reason why this is done by the Ithacans ;
 they might intend to raise those several islands to engage
 against Ulysses, and draw them to arms by such moving
 spectacles. Dacier.

Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies,
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies ;
 Arise (or ye for ever fall) arise !
 Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed !
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed. 500
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head,
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall.
 Spoke when he ceas'd : dumb-sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wond'ring throng 505
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along ;
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke.

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand ; 510
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode.
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,

v. 509. *Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land.*]

There is great art in the speeches of Medon and Eupithes : Eupithes said that Ulysses had slain the bravest of the Greeks ; Medon allows it, but adds, that it was done by the will of the gods : the consequence therefore is, that to fight against Ulysses upon this account, is to fight against the gods. Eupithes applies to their revenge, Medon to their fears ; Eupithes sheds tears to move their compassion, Medon intimidates them by averring that the assistance of the gods was visible on the side of Ulysses. The persons likewise whom Homer employs to plead against Eupithes are well chosen ; Halitherses is a prophet, Medon an herald, and both persons esteemed sacred by their offices ; this is the reason why the Greeks are said to be struck with awe at their appearance. Dacier, etc.

Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood :
 In vain old Mentor's form the god bely'd, 515
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook,
 When slowly rising, Halitherses spoke :

(Reverend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew) 520
 Me too ye fathers hear ! from you proceed
 The ills ye mourn ; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons the rein,
 (Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain)

v. 518. ——— *Halitherses spoke.*] The speech of Medon had a good effect upon the audience ; for Homer adds, that the whole assembly grew afraid ; Halitherses perceived it, and seconds it. He insists upon a new head of persuasion, and sets forth the justice of the late action of Ulysses : the suitors were slain, says he, for their crimes, and you are guilty for not restraining their outrages ; and then to deter them from their present designs, he represents their danger in engaging against their king. From these speeches, observes Eustathius, Homer draws the probability of the future part of the story ; he divides the enemy, and wins over almost half of their numbers ; whereas, had they proceeded unanimously, Ulysses must necessarily have perished by their power.

It is observable, that though Phemius accompanies Medon, yet he is silent ; the reason is, he as it were speaks by the mouth of Medon, he was witness to the assistance of heaven on the part of Ulysses, and approves and confirms by his presence, the truth of his testimony. It is thus on the stage where the whole chorus was antiently supposed to speak by the mouth of their prolocutor. Dacier, etc.

An absent hero's bed they sought to soil; 525

An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil:

Immoderate riot, and intemperate lust;

Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.

Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale;

Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail. 530

His moderate words some better minds persuade:

They part and join him; but the number stay'd.

They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,

And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.

They case their limbs in brags: to arms they run; 535

The broad effulgence blazes in the sun.

Before the city, and in ample plain,

They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.

Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;

Fate hears them not, and death attends him there. 540

This past on earth, while in the realms above

Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove,

v. 542. *Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove.*]

Homer, to give importance to the conclusive action of his poem, introduces Jupiter and Minerva in debate about the event of it. At the beginning of the *Odyssey* he describes the gods in consultation for the re-establishment of Ulysses: in the conclusion of it, we see Jupiter himself rewarding the virtue and bravery of Ulysses, and decreeing him to reign in peace and tranquillity. This is carried on with great judgment: we are fully satisfied, that the action of the *Odyssey* is compleated in the happiness of the hero, when we hear Jupiter giving his sanction to it. Besides, it leaves a noble image of the greatness of Ulysses, and of the whole story of the *Odyssey*, upon the reader's mind, when we see it is of such a weight as to engage Ju-

May I presume to search thy secret soul ?

Oh Pow'r supreme, oh ruler of the whole !

Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state 545

Or peaceful amity, or stern debate ?

Declare thy purpose ; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own ? (the god replies

Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)

Had not long since thy knowing soul decreed,

The chief's return should make the guilty bleed ?

'Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.

Yet hear the issue : since Ulysses' hand

Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.

None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own : 555

Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son :

piter in his favour. Thus in imitation of Homer, toward the conclusion of the *Æneid*, Virgil describes Jupiter and Juno in debate concerning the decisive action between *Æneas* and *Turnus*.

v' 553. ———— *Since Ulysses' hand*

Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.]

The design of the *Odyssey* is to shew virtue rewarded, and vice punished ; here to introduce this act of justice with the greater solemnity, Jupiter is represented giving his assent to it : " Let there be peace, says that deity, " but let justice be done, and the guilty punished ; " the reader must necessarily be satisfied with the equity of the cause of Ulysses, when he hears Jupiter himself directing in it. Besides, this conduct of Homer presents us with an excellent moral ; it shews us that the deity is the governor of human affairs, and arbiter of peace and war ; as he directs, the scenes of blood are opened or closed, and the words of Homer, *Δις δ' ἰταλὴτα θεῶν*, may be applied to the *Odyssey* as well as the *Iliad*.

Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
 And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing.
 Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
 His people blessing, by his people blest. 560
 Let all be peace.——He said, and gave the nod
 That binds the fates; the sanction of the god:
 And prompt to execute th' eternal will,
 Descended Pallas from th'Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast, 565
 The rage of hunger and of thirst repress:
 To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent:
 A son of Dolius on the message went,
 Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach'd, embattel'd on the field. 570
 With backward step he hastens to the bow'r,
 And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
 Four friends alone Ulysses cause embrace,
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race:

v. 573. *Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace.*]

The poet tells us the exact number of the party of Ulysses, which consisted of ten persons under the direction of Dolius, Laertes, and Ulysses: how many were under Eupithes is uncertain, we therefore are at liberty to suppose them more or less superior in number; Medon and Halitherses had withdrawn almost half of his assistants, and by that method reduced the enemy to a greater equality: it is probable that they had no very extraordinary inequality, for the onset is so sudden, that the friends of the dead suitors could not have time to embody; besides it appears, from the sixteenth *Odyssey*, that of the whole band of suitors, twelve only were Ithacans, the rest came from the adjacent islands, and therefore none of their friends

Old Dolius too his rusty arms put on; 575

And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone.

Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,

And brazen panoply invests the band.

The opening gates at once their war display;

Fierce they rush forth: Ulysses leads the way. 580

That moment joins them with celestial aid,

In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid:

The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast

Swell with new joy, and thus his son address'd.

Behold, Telemachus! (nor fear the sight) 585

The brave embattel'd; the grim front of fight!

The valiant with the valiant must contend;

Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,

Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread;

Regard thyself, the living, and the dead. 590

Thy eyes, great father! on this battle cast

Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus: the gallant boy

Good old Laertes beard with panting joy;

And, blest! thrice blest this happy day! he cries, 595

The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes,

A son and grandson of th' Arcesian name

Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame!

could as yet be arrived to assist Eupithes, and consequently this party consisted solely of Ithacans, and were not perhaps greatly superior to Ulysses. This observation likewise furnishes us with a reason why the enemy was so easily defeated, by so small a body of men as engaged for Ulysses.

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear:

Son of Arceſius, rev'rend warrior, hear! 600

Jove and Jove's daughter firſt implore in pray'r,

Then whirling high, diſcharge thy lance in air.

She ſaid, infuſing courage with the word.

Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,

And whirling high diſmiſt the lance in air. 605

Full at Eupithes drove the deathful ſpear:

The braſs-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound;

He falls, earth thunders, and his arms reſound.

Before the father and the conqu'ring ſon

Heaps ruſh on heaps; they fight, they drop, they run.

Now by the ſword and now the jav'lin fall 611

The rebel race, and death had ſwallow'd all;

But from on high the blue ey'd virgin cry'd;

Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide.

"Forbear, ye nations! your mad hands forbear 615

"From mutual ſlaughter: Peace deſcends to ſpare.

Fear ſhook the nations. At the voice divine

They drop their jav'lins, and their rage reſign.

All ſcatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons lie;

Some fall to earth, and ſome confus'dly fly. 620

v. 606. *Full at Eupithes drove the deathful ſpear.*]

Euſtathius calls this an admirable incident, or change of fortune in favour of Ulyſſes. The ſon of Eupithes is ſlain by the ſon of Laertes, and the father of Antinous by the father of Ulyſſes. We now ſee Ulyſſes happy in his wife, his ſon, and his father; victorious over his enemies, and his ſubjects ſubmitting to his authority; and therefore the action is now complete, and terminates with the *Odyssey*.

With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along,
 Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.
 But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims ;
 Before Minerva shot the livid flames ;
 Blazing thy fell, and at her feet expir'd : 625
 Then slopt the goddess, trembled, and retir'd.

Descended from the gods ! Ulysses, cease ;
 Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.

So Pallas spoke : The mandate from above
 The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove, 630
 In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord,
 " And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

v. 630. ——— *The virgin-seed of Jove,*

In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord.]

The meaning of the passage is no more than this, when stripped of its poetical ornaments : Mentor, a person of great wisdom, acts as a mediator between the king and his subjects, he regulates the conditions of peace, and ratifies it with sacrifices to the gods ; this being an act of wisdom, poetry ascribes it to Minerva.

I must observe with what dignity Homer concludes the *Odyssey* : to honour his hero, he introduces two deities, Jupiter and Pallas, who interest themselves in his cause : he then paints Ulysses in the boldest colours, as he rushes upon the enemy with the utmost intrepidity, and his courage is so ungovernable, that Jupiter is forced to restrain it with his thunder. It is usual for orators to reserve the strongest arguments for the conclusion, that they may leave them fresh upon the reader's memory ; Homer uses the same conduct, he represents his hero in all his terror, he shews him to be irresistible, and by this method leaves us fully possess'd with a noble idea of his magnanimity.

It has been already observed, that the end of the action of the *Odyssey* is the re-establishment of Ulysses in full

peace and tranquillity, this is not effected till the defeat of the suitors friends; and therefore if the poet had concluded before this event, the *Odyssey* had been imperfect. It was necessary that the reader should not only be informed of the return of Ulysses to his country, and the punishment of the suitors, but of his re-establishment by a peaceful possession of his regal authority; which is not executed, till these last disorders raised by Eupithes are settled by the victory of Ulysses, and therefore this is the natural conclusion of the action.

This book opens with the morning, and ends before night, so that the whole story of the *Odyssey* is comprehended in the compass of one and forty days. Monsieur Dacier upon Aristotle remarks, that an epic poem ought not to be too long: we should be able to retain all the several parts of it at once in our memory: if we lose the idea of the beginning when we come to the conclusion, it is an argument that it is of too large an extent, and its length destroys its beauty. What seems to favour this decision is, that the *Æneid*, *Iliad*, and *Odyssey* are conformable to this rule of Aristotle, and every one of those poems may be read in the compass of a single day.

I have now gone through the collections upon the *Odyssey*, and laid together what occurred most remarkable in this excellent poem. I am not so vain as to think these remarks free from faults, nor so disingenuous as not to confess them: all writers have occasion for indulgence, and those most who least acknowledge it. I have sometimes used madam Dacier as she has done others, in transcribing some of her remarks without particularizing them; but indeed it was through inadvertency only that her name is sometimes omitted at the bottom of the note. If my performance has merit, either in these, or in my part of the translation (namely in the sixth, eleventh, and eighteenth books) it is but just to attribute it to the judgment and care of Mr. Pope, by whose hand every sheet was corrected. His other, and much more able assistant, was

Mr. Fenton, in the fourth and the twentieth books. It was our particular request, that our several parts might not be made known to the world till the end of it: and if they have had the good fortune not to be distinguished from his, we ought to be the less vain, since the resemblance proceeds much less from our diligence and study to copy his manner, than from his own daily revival and correction. The most experienced painters will not wonder at this, who very well know, that no critic can pronounce even of the pieces of Raphael or Titian, which have, or which have not, been worked upon by those of their school? when the same master's hand has directed the execution of the whole, reduced it to one character and colouring, gone over the several parts, and given to each their finishing.

I must not conclude, without declaring our mutual satisfaction in Mr. Pope's acceptance of our best endeavours, which have contributed at least to his more speedy execution of this great undertaking. If ever my name be numbered with the learned, I must ascribe it to his friendship, in transmitting it to posterity by a participation in his labours. May the sense I have of this, and other instances of that friendship, be known as long as his name will cause mine to last! and may I to this end be permitted, at the conclusion of a work which is a kind of monument of his partiality to me, to place the following lines, as an inscription memorial of it!

LET vulgar souls triumphal arches raise,
 Or speaking marbles to record their praise :
 And picture (to the voice of fame unknown)
 The mimic feature on the breathing stone ;
 Mere mortals ! subject to death's total sway,
 Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day !

'Tis thine, on ev'ry heart to grave thy praise,
 A monument which worth alone can raise :
 Sure to survive, when time shall whelm in dust
 The arch, the marble, and the mimic bust :
 Nor till the volumes of the expanded sky
 Blaze in one flame, shalt thou and Homer die :
 Then sink together, in the world's last fires,
 What heav'n created, and what heav'n inspires.
 If ought on earth, when once this breath is fled,
 With human transport touch the mighty dead :
 Shakespear, rejoice : his hand thy page refines ;
 Now ev'ry scene with native brightness shines :
 Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought ;
 So Tully polish'd what Lucretius wrote ;
 Prun'd by his care, thy lawrels loftier grow,
 And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.

Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael ! time invades,
 And the bold figure from the canvass fades,
 A rival hand recalls from every part
 Some latent grace, and equals art with art ;
 Transported we survey the dubious strife,
 While each fair image starts again to life.

How long, untun'd, had Homer's sacred lyre.
 Jarr'd grating discord, all extinct his fire ?

This you beheld; and taught by heav'n to sing,
 Call'd the loud music from the sounding string;
 Now wak'd from slumbers of three thousand years,
 Once more Achilles in dread pomp appears,
 Tow'rs o'er the field of death; as fierce he turns,
 Keen flash his arms, and all the hero burns;
 With martial stalk, and more than mortal might,
 He strides along, and meets the gods in fight:
 Then the pale Titans, chain'd on burning floors,
 Start at the din that rends th' infernal shores;
 Tremble the tow'rs of heav'n, earth rocks her coasts,
 And gloomy Pluto shakes with all his ghosts.
 To ev'ry theme responds thy various lay;
 Here roars a torrent, there meanders play;
 Sonorous as the storm thy numbers rise,
 Toss the wild waves, and thunder in the skies;
 Or softer than a yielding virgins sigh,
 Then gentle breezes breathe away and die.
 Thus, like the radiant god who shades the day,
 You paint the vale, or gild the azure way;
 And while with ev'ry theme the verse complies,
 Sink without groveling, without rashness rise.

Proceed, great bard! awake th' harmonious string,
 Be ours all Homer! still Ulysses sing.
 How long* that hero, by unskillful hands,
 Stript of his robes, a beggar trod our lands!
 Such as he wander'd o'er his native coast,
 Shrunk by the wand, and all the warrior lost:

* Odyssey, lib. 16.

O'er his smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread;
 Old age disgrac'd the honours of his head;
 Nor longer in his heavy eye-ball shin'd
 The glance divine, forth beaming from the mind.
 But you, like Pallas, ev'ry limb infold
 With royal robes, and bid him shine in gold;
 Touch'd by your hand his manly frame improves
 With grace divine, and like a god he moves.

Ev'n I, the meanest of the muses train,
 Inflam'd by thee, attempt a nobler strain;
 Advent'rous waken the Mæonian lyre,
 Tun'd by your hand, and sing as you inspire:
 So arm'd by great Achilles for the fight,
 Patroclus conquer'd in Achilles' right:
 Like theirs, our friendship! and I boast my name
 To thine united——For thy *Friendship's Fame*.

This labour past, of heavenly subjects sing,
 While hov'ring angels listen on the wing,
 To hear from earth such heart-felt raptures rise,
 As when they sing, suspended hold the skies:
 Or nobly rising in fair virtue's cause,
 From thy own life transcribe th' unerring laws:
 Teach a bad world beneath her sway to bend;
 To verse like thine fierce savages attend,
 And men more fierce: when Orpheus tunes the lay,
 Ev'n fiends relenting hear their rage away.

W. BROOME.



POSTSCRIPT.

By Mr. POPE.

I CANNOT dismiss this work without a few observations on the true character and stile of it. Whoever reads the *Odyfsey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character, or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived, and err against the first principle of criticism, which is to consider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyfsey* is a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples, and precepts, of civil and domestic life. Homer is here a person

*Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis,
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes:
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippos et Crantoræ dicit.*

The *Odyfsey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in *moral, subject, manner, and stile*; to which it has no sort of relation, but as the story happens to follow in order of time, and as some of the same persons are actors in it. Yet from this incidental connexion many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part, and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critic as Longinus seems not wholly free from it. Although what he has said, has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyfsey* than it really does, if we consider the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

‘ The *Odyfsey*, says he, is an instance, how natural it

' is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and de-
 ' cline, to delight itself in narrations and fables. For, that
 ' Homer composed the *Odyſſey* after the *Iliad*, many
 ' proofs may be given, *etc.* From hence, in my judgment,
 ' it proceeds, that as the *Iliad* was written while his spirit
 ' was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that
 ' work is dramatic and full of action; whereas the greater
 ' part of the *Odyſſey* is employed in narration, which is
 ' the taste of old age: so that in this latter piece we may
 ' compare him to the setting sun, which has still the same
 ' greatness, but not the same ardor, or force. He speaks
 ' not in the same strain; we see no more that sublime of
 ' the *Iliad* which marches on with a constant pace, with-
 ' out ever being stopped, or retarded: there appears no
 ' more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and
 ' passions, pouring one after another: there is no more
 ' the same fury, or the same volubility of diction, so suit-
 ' able to action, and all along drawing in such innumera-
 ' ble images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is
 ' always great, even when he ebbs and retires; even when
 ' he is lowest and loses himself most in narrations and in-
 ' credible fictions: as instances of this, we cannot for-
 ' get the descriptions of tempests, the adventures of Ulyſ-
 ' ses with the Cyclops, and many others. But though
 ' all this be age, it is the age of Homer——And it may
 ' be said, for the credit of these fictions, that they are
 ' *beautiful dreams*, or, if you will, the *dreams of Ju-*
 ' *piter himself*. I spoke of the *Odyſſey* only, to show,
 ' that the greatest poets, when their genius wants strength
 ' and warmth for the pathetic, for the most part employ
 ' themselves in painting the manners. This Homer has
 ' done, in characterizing the suitors, and describing their
 ' way of life; which is properly a branch of comedy whose
 ' peculiar business it is to represent the manners of men.

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which Lon-
 ginus is writing: That, and not the nature of Homer's
 poem, is his subject. After having highly extolled the
 sublimity and fire of the *Iliad*, he justly observes the O-

Odyssey to have less of those qualities, and to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on human life. Nor is it his business here to determine, whether the *elevated spirit* of the one, or the *just moral* of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury of which he is speaking, cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspiration which is to run through a whole epic poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or passions, of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer, that Longinus breaks into this reflection; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

Upon the whole, he affirms the Odyssey to have less sublimity and fire than the Iliad, but he does not say it wants the sublime, or wants fire. He affirms it to be narrative, but not that the narration is defective. He affirms it to abound in fictions, not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice, and particular in painting the manners, but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points, accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a masterpiece as the Iliad.

The amount of this passage is this; that in his own particular taste, and with respect to the Sublime, Longinus preferred the Iliad: and because the Odyssey was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old-age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject, not that it affected him in the execution of it: and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgment. For, had he, as madam Dacier observes, composed the Odyssey in his youth, and the Iliad in his age, both must in reason have been exactly the same as they now stand. To blame Homer for his choice of such a

subject, as did not admit the same incidents, and the same pomp of stile as his former ; is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he must ever after only copy himself.

The *Battle of Constantine*, and the *School of Athens*, are both pieces of Raphael: shall we censure the School of Athens as faulty, because it has not the fury and fire of the other ? or shall we say, that Raphael was grown grave and old, because he chose to represent the manners of old men and philosophers ? There is all the silence, tranquillity, and composure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry, and tumult in the other, which the subject of either required : both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the painter or poet be young or old, who designs and performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was master not only of his art, but of his discretion.

Aristotle makes no such distinction between the two poems: he constantly cites them with equal praise and draws the rules and examples of epic writing equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyssæy* that Horace gives the preference, in the epistle to Lollius, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how opposite his opinion is to that of Longinus ; and that the particulars he chuses to extol, are those very *fiction*s and *pictures of the manners* which the other seems least to approve. Those fables and manners are of the very essence of the work : but even without that regard, the fables themselves have both more invention and more instruction, and the manners more moral and example, than those of the *Iliad*.

In some points, and those the most essential to the epic poem, the *Odyssæy* is confessed to excel the *Iliad* ; and principally in the great end of it, the Moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the Fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for epic writers to follow : accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*, and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the

manners, it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these, that he rather taxes Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the Narrations, although they are more numerous as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old-age, and are neither more prolix nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the Iliad. Not to mention the length of those of Phoenix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh (which may be thought in compliance to their characters) those of Glaucus in the sixth, of Æneas in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the whole Odyssey. And that the propriety of stile, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay; we must consider, in both his poems, such parts as are of a similar nature, and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each, the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious and as various.

The Odyssey is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full, for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the Sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts, from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes, and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterwards through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The Odyssey, as I have before said, ought to be considered according to its own nature and design, not with an eye to the Iliad. To censure Homer because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is, as if a gardiner who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so entirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was *partly of the nature of comedy*, ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the Iliad. How little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer, may appear from hence, that although the character of Ulysses there was already drawn, yet here he purposely turns to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite to all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy; Calypso, though a goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approaching to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Irus, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout, are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the *Style*. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the Odyssey is not always clothed in the majesty of verse proper to tragedy, but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety.

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil; and perhaps those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in History, where the representations of common, or even domestic things, in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to *little*

circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? what particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused, idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect, and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to speak simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of his subject, to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated stile would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced upon figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand stile on little subjects, is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanics: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am upon this head, it will be found a just observation, that the *low actions of life* cannot be put into a figurative stile without being ridiculous; but *things natural* can. Metaphors raise the latter into dignity, as we see in the Georgics; but throw the former into ridicule, as in the Lutrin. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies censure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore these may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule follows: but when rational beings are represented above their real characters, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in morality. The Bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expression for low actions or

thoughts is the *true sublime* of Don Quixote. How far unfit it is for epic poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock epic. It is so far from being the Sublime of tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast; when poets, instead of being, as they imagine, constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian: that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in epic poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that *language of the gods* proper to the muse who sings, and is inspired; and that of *men* who are introduced speaking only according to nature. Farther, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of deities; and again, in those which may be called set harangues, or orations, and those which are only conversation, or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet: what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches: not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him, a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poems more animated, but less grave and majestic; and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of tragedy ly under the same necessity, if they would copy nature: whereas that painted and poetical diction which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric: this is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil in those of Drances and Turnus gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments: which indeed fits only that language of the gods we have been speaking of, or that of a muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like

travelling all along on the ridge of a hill ; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs.

Indeed the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts, has been the extreme difficulty of preserving that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an epic poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to descend to be familiar, with diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural ; something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers : but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds ; they are obvious to all capacities ; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony (which are all the qualities of style) but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to share of the sublime, may pass notwithstanding any defects in the rest, nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious, clear, and harmonious. He shows not less invention, in assembling the humbler, than the greater, thoughts and images ; nor less judgment, in proportioning the style and the versification to these than to the other. Let it be remembered, that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the Sublime are derived, was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself, I cannot pretend to determine ; but to his translator, I can affirm, (however unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been much the more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and the same ornaments of diction, as in the Iliad ; he will, and he

ought to be disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature; and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer, which is the same thing.

It must be allowed, that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe, that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time; for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use: and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause: Homer seems to have taken upon him the character of an historian, antiquary, divine, and professor of arts and sciences; as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator, who, in some measure, takes the place of Homer; and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts therefore are requisite to supply these disadvantages, in order to dignify and solemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end, of the stile of Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working old abbey stones into a building, which I have sometimes seen, to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality requisite to a new work; I mean without rendering it too unfamiliar, or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smoothness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a stile judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way:

but then the road must be as good, as the way is antient; the stile must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptnesses, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions: no man delights in furrows and stumbling-blocks: and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most imitators, are not copies but caricatures of their original; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places: whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases every where alike, but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast and strange, as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, *etc.* than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the pictures of paradise, the loves of our first parents, the entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual stile better serves to awaken our ideas in the descriptions, and in the imaging and picturesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together; as in his fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured, contrary to the practice of all other epic poets, to imitate Homer's lownesses in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatic parts: since in his speeches, where clearness above all is necessary, there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading: and in this certainly he ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's stile in the present translation, great pains has been taken to be easy

and natural. The chief merit I can pretend to, is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers, but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen, who joined with me, shown as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from them, was made known in general to the public in the original proposals for this work, and the particulars are specified at the conclusion of it; to which I must add (to be punctually just) some part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it; and consequently of its faults, is chargeable upon me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have bestowed as much time and pains upon the whole, as were consistent with the indispensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion. At the least, it is a pleasure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greatest and most antient of poets, with some dignity; and, I hope, with as little disadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited success of that translation, any one will wonder why I should enterprize the *Odyssey*; I think it sufficient to say, that Homer himself did the same, or the world would never have seen it.

I designed to have ended this postscript here; but since I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controversy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged if I make use of this last opportunity, to say a very few words about some reflections which the late madam Dacier bestowed on the first part of my preface to the *Iliad*, and which she published at the end of her translation of that poem*.

* Second edition, Paris, 1719.

To write gravely an answer to them would be too much for the reflections; and to say nothing concerning them would be too little for the author. It is owing to the industry of that learned lady, that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Homer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek, and in Eustathius. She challenges, on his account, a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet; and, I hope, that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critic, I should not have apprehended their effect, and should therefore have been silent concerning them: but since they are madam Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under madam Dacier's banner, and have waged war in defence of the divine Homer against all the heretics of the age. And yet it is madam Dacier who accuses me, and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms, that the most declared enemies of this author have never said any thing against him more injurious, or more unjust, than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment past by so great a critic? the world, who decides so often, and who examines so seldom; the world, who, even in matters of literature, is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be byassed?

All this however has happened, and madam Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same error, from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen upon Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reproved; I mean, the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use, and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism, because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning: could Homer have had the honour of explaining his, before that august tribunal where monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him, and from which even madam Dacier's translation of the Iliad could not preserve him!

How unhappy was it for me, that the knowledge of our Island-tongue was as necessary to madam Dacier, in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to monsieur de la Motte, in that of our great author; or to any of those whom she styles *blind censurers*, and blames for condemning what they did not understand!

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense, from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's even from the translation of la Valterie, which preceded her own.

It pleased me however to find, that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface, but only at a few particular expressions. She proposed little more than, to use her own phrase, to *combat two or three similies*; and, I hope, that to combat a simile is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a simile is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little, and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky similies taken by themselves may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator: or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which taken by themselves likewise, may, to the same person, have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenor of my

argument, that which precedes, and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them: and if madam Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say more than once the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, on some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as madam Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like a heretic: he will easily see that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer *opinions*, and she delivers *doctrines*; that my imagination represents Homer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was therefore no need of defending Homer against me, who, if I mistake not, had carried my admiration of him as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless families, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in; and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning, but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours: I thought this required a little qualification. I confess that in my opinion the world has mended in some points, such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madam Dacier judges otherways in this; but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the antient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contend-

ed for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well, but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting, or, if you will, stealing *her* sentiment. The truth is, she might have said *her words*, for I used them on purpose, being then professedly citing from her; tho' I might have done the same without intending that compliment, for they are also to be found in Eustathius, and the sentiment I believe is that of all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark, only that in the first part of it madam Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her, and in the last that I do; but this is a temper which every polite man should over-look in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders, and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine: she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English. "Homer, I said, "opened a new and boundless walk for his imagination, "and created a world for himself in the invention of "fable;" which he translates, *Homere crea pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant la fable.*

Madam Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me; and I, in the translator. As to what I mean by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterwards particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words. "If Homer was not the first, who introduced the deities, as Herodotus imagines, into the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought them "into a system of machinery for poetry."

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle, and she is pleased to send me back to this philosopher's treatise of poetry, and to her preface on the *Odyssey* for my better instruction. Now though I am sawcy enough to think that one may sometimes dis-

fer from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am sure one may sometimes fall into an error by following him servilely; yet I own that to quote any author for what he never said is a blunder; (but by the way, to correct an author for what he never said, is somewhat worse than a blunder.) My words were these. "As there is a greater variety of character in the Iliad than in any other poem, so there is of speeches. Every thing in it has manners, as Aristotle expresses it; that is, every thing is acted or spoken: very little passes in narration." She justly says, "That every thing which is acted or spoken has not necessarily manners merely because it is acted or spoken." Agreed: but I would ask the question, whether any thing can have manners which is neither acted nor spoken? if not, then the whole Iliad being almost spent in speech and action, almost every thing in it has manners: since Homer has been proved before in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners, and indeed his whole poem is one continued occasion of shewing this bright part of his talent.

To speak fairly, it is impossible she could read even the translation, and take my sense so wrong as she represents it; but I was first translated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expression indeed was not quite exact; it should have been, "Every thing has manners, as Aristotle calls them." But such a fault methinks might have been spared, since if one was to look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find some mistakes which no context can redress; as where she makes Eustathius call Gratiſthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the Physician †. What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded, to Homer's, hers, and my enemies, from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance! How un-

† Dacier Remarques sur le 4me livre de l'Odyss. pag. 467.

lucky had it been, when she insulted Mr. de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the * speech of Helen to Hector, ll. 6. if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer !

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy, for our great author's honour were mutual, our endeavours to advance it were equal, and I have as often trembled for it in her hands, as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship ; otherwise not one's taste alone, but one's morality had been corrupted, nor would any one's religion have been unsuspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to holy scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and general acts of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and enquiry about the grounds of it ; it is the same in admiration, some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed, that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in a triumph, proceed not from his friends, but the rabble : and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and, I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast ; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, upon whom, at the end of these remarks, madam Dacier congratulates my country : one capable of *correcting Homer, and consequently of reser-*

ming mankind, and amending this constitution. It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied, since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We stedfastly and unanimously believe, both his poem, and our constitution, to be the best that ever human wit invented : that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other ; and, old as they both are, we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which madam Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and a quiet subject.

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